MODERN DRUMMER

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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DECEMBER 1983

Carl PALMER

Anthony Cirone

Plus: Neil Peart On Soloing

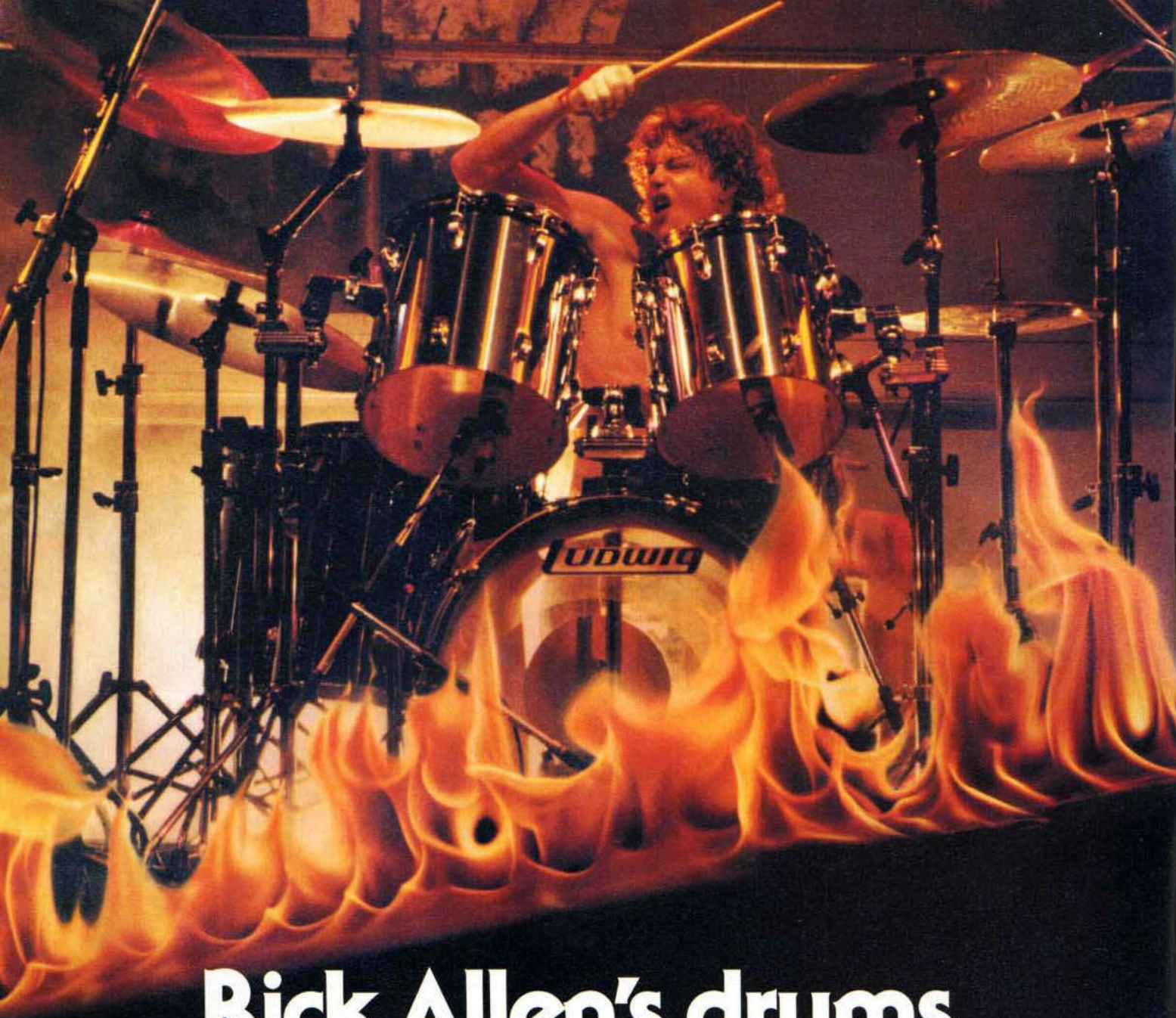
Simon Kirke

Ed Soph On Big Band

Win Billy Cobham's Drums

Buyer's Guide To Drum Computers

Def Leppard



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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Our 50th Anniversary Issue

The issue you're now reading is somewhat special for us in that it's the 50th issue of *Modern Drummer* Magazine. Recently, I devoted the better part of a lazy Sunday afternoon to leisurely browsing through all seven volumes of MDpage by page, and was actually amazed myself at the wealth of information contained within those 50 issues.

We've interviewed an impressive list of drummers from every phase of the music business, and published articles by hundreds of respected drumming authorities. We have looked in on dozens of manufacturers, drum shops, and percussion schools, and provided insight into the care and selection of all types of equipment. We found out about everything from the drums of Africa and Trinidad, to what arrangers, bandleaders and bassists expect from a drummer. We've glimpsed at the vintage drum products of the past, and examined the trends of the future. We have paid tribute to the legends in the drumming field, and balanced these tributes with practical advice for the young, up-and-coming drummer trying to survive on the club bandstand and on the road. We've delved into the history of rock and jazz drumming, studied the evolution of the modern-day drumset, and printed thousands of bars of rhythms, exercises and transcriptions. We have presented ideas on how to open a drum shop, publish a book, and get a product on the market, and investigated the controversial relationships between drumming and weight lifting, drinking, hearing loss, personal management, higher education and smoke-filled nightclubs.

We've had issues that were a delight to prepare, and others which caused us incredible grief. There were those which we felt somewhat extra special about, and others which didn't turn out exactly as we had hoped. We've made a lot of friends in the industry and, as one might expect, a few enemies along the way as well. We've grown from a staff of one to fifteen; from 300 square feet of office space to 3,000; from four, 32-page issues a year to 12 at 120 pages each.

But, perhaps the greatest satisfaction of all has come from watching *MD* strengthen the sense of camaraderie among drummers. It's unfortunate that for many years young drummers found it necessary to challenge one another rather than learn from each other; to compete with one another rather than inspire each other. It's an attitude that is definitely changing.

Vic Firth, in a 1982 interview noted, "Among the young students today, I see much *less* hostility, and *more* friendliness . . . more admiration for someone who does something well. Instead of getting mad or envious, they accept that as a challenge to go out and practice more."

It's very true. The young drummers of today are much more open with other players, more honest with themselves, and very much into the sharing of ideas, techniques and concepts. And it's precisely this new attitude which is helping them reach their full potential as musicians.

1 like to think *Modern Drummer* had a little something to do with that. In truth, it's what we're really all about, and the reason we were created in the first place. If we've made any contribution at all, I'm hopeful that's what stands out amidst the thousands of words and pictures which constitute our first 50 issues. *~.

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READER'S PLATFORM

GADD: UP CLOSE

We were very disappointed in your review of our videotape, "Steve Gadd: Up Close," in your August issue.

While we recognize that a question like, "Why did you want to be a drummer?" may seem trite to some, in the context of our tape it is not. The reviewer completely missed the purpose of the tape. It is not simply a lesson in "how-to-play-like Steve Gadd," but rather a one-hour insight into the man, his playing experiences, his influences and his overall musical concepts.

We do agree with the review on one point: Steve Gadd is truly a "dynamic musician" and "one of the great drummers of our time." He can enhance any musical project with which he is associated. That's why we are so proud that Gadd overwhelmingly endorsed the "Up Close" tape, and is already working on a second videotape with us.

The response to all the DCI Music Video tapes has been extremely positive. The Gadd video has been especially well received by drummers who appreciate its depth, range and scope. We see it as similar to a good book. There are many levels to it and much information available to students from beginner to advanced.

By the way, your reviewer failed to mention that "Steve Gadd: Up Close" is a 60-minute tape, which is why it is selling for $79.95. This certainly is not expensive when you consider that other tapes you chose to review in the same issue as ours are only 30-minutes long and sell for $49.95.

Robert Wallis
Producer-DCI Music Video
New York, NY

HASKELL HARR

Thank you for putting the letter about me in your August issue. I've had letters from New Jersey, Ohio and Illinois. Because of my poor eyesight, I'm not able to answer them all. I'm in the P.A.S. Hall of Fame and they furnish me with all my writing paper. I started a percussion course in the Vander Cook College of Music in 1931. I received a letter from one of the members there at that time. It's surprising just how many letters I get from young people starting out in this modern time who are using my books one and two. I'm now 89. I can't see very well and don't do much walking. I am like Father Time!

Haskell Harr
Room 8
San Dimas Golden Age Convalescent Home
1033 E. Arrow Highway
Glendora, CA 91740

ROY'S REPLY

In response to Mr. McCarthy's criticism of my article on endorsements, I would like to set the record straight. The editorial staff of MD asked me to do the article because of a number of letters written to MD concerning endorsements.

As to the comment that I am the type of person "who has been from company to company seeking his own personal fortune at the expense of others," these are the facts!

From 1957 to 1974 I endorsed Zildjian Cymbals. From 1974 to 1983 I endorsed Paiste Cymbals. From 1960 to 1980 I endorsed Rogers Drums. That is hardly "jumping from company to company."

I also have never been paid to endorse and use a product. I have been paid a fee to do clinics and concerts, usually by a local music store or school and the company involved.

If Mr. McCarthy is going to criticize someone, he should at least get the facts straight before speaking. Obviously he did not.

I would suggest that he might benefit from my article on "Rumors" (August issue) before he attacks someone else without foundation.

Roy Burns
Anaheim, CA

WHAT DRUM?

Allow me to congratulate you on the September issue. You certainly covered the "something for everyone" aspect. Your various editors and writers do an excellent job of reporting. I'd like to add a thought. Sometimes a particular drummer describes the drums he uses, but the accompanying pictures show him behind a different set. It's a good idea to print a clear picture as described in the article.

Marv Gordon
Miami Beach, FL

SMOKY DACUS

Just recently I had the pleasure of experiencing The Texas Playboys in concert. Smoky Dacus, the original Playboy drummer, never ceases to amaze me. The man is 73 years old and still has the enthusiasm, energy and chops of a young player. What an inspiration! Smoky was mentioned in "The History of Rock Drumming" (July '82 MD), but I'm sure the drumming world would enjoy reading an interview with him.

Phillip Fajardo
Gatlin Brothers Band

Editor's Note: We've already taped an interview with Smoky. Lookfor it in afuture issue.

DRUMS AD NAUSEUM

Let us hope that Bill Bruford's views on equipment vs. execution/inspiration touch home with your readers. I'm constantly amazed at the amount of space in MD devoted to running arguments on the relative merits of medium-weight heads, double bass drums, etc., etc., ad nauseum. Come on, campers, let's grow up a bit. It doesn't matter a damn what kind of equipment the other guy is using. What matters is what *you* are using, and whether or not you're comfortable with it. If you've decided that there's nothing right at all with your sound, don't take someone else's word for what will sound good. Get up off your thrones and find a sympathetic retailer who'll put up with you while you find out the difference between brand X and brand Y drum heads. By the way, does anyone know what kind of towel Buzz Narbles (of Firey Pineapple Underwear fame) dries his hands on? See, I've got problems twirling my sticks, and I figure . . .

Craig Harris
Toronto, Canada

PRODUCT ENDORSEMENTS

I read your August *Editor's Overview* on product endorsements with great interest, and I agree with you completely. The real meaning of product endorsement remains intact when the artist endorses a product for the pure and simple reason that he or she enjoys using it.

We do not expect our endorsees to use our products "exclusively" as some manufacturers do. We realize "sound" is what it is all about. Some drummers may need that special sound of calfskin, plastic or a steel drum to create a style for a particular piece of music. We do not believe in limiting them strictly to our products.

We at Duraline/Syndrum have never paid a cent for the use of an artist's name. Nor do we give away products as payment. We do, however, furnish artists with prototype goods for testing, or loan equipment if an artists' kit is elsewhere and they are recording or appearing on TV in the Los Angeles area. Our policy is to sell products at cost to our endorsing artists—which adds even more credence to our artist relationships. We feel that endorsees who buy the product really want it.

Thank you for opening up the subject of artist endorsement payment. Your readers are probably pleasantly surprised to find out that endorsements for professional products can be, and usually are, real.

Bob Scott
President
Duraline/Syndrum/Dragon

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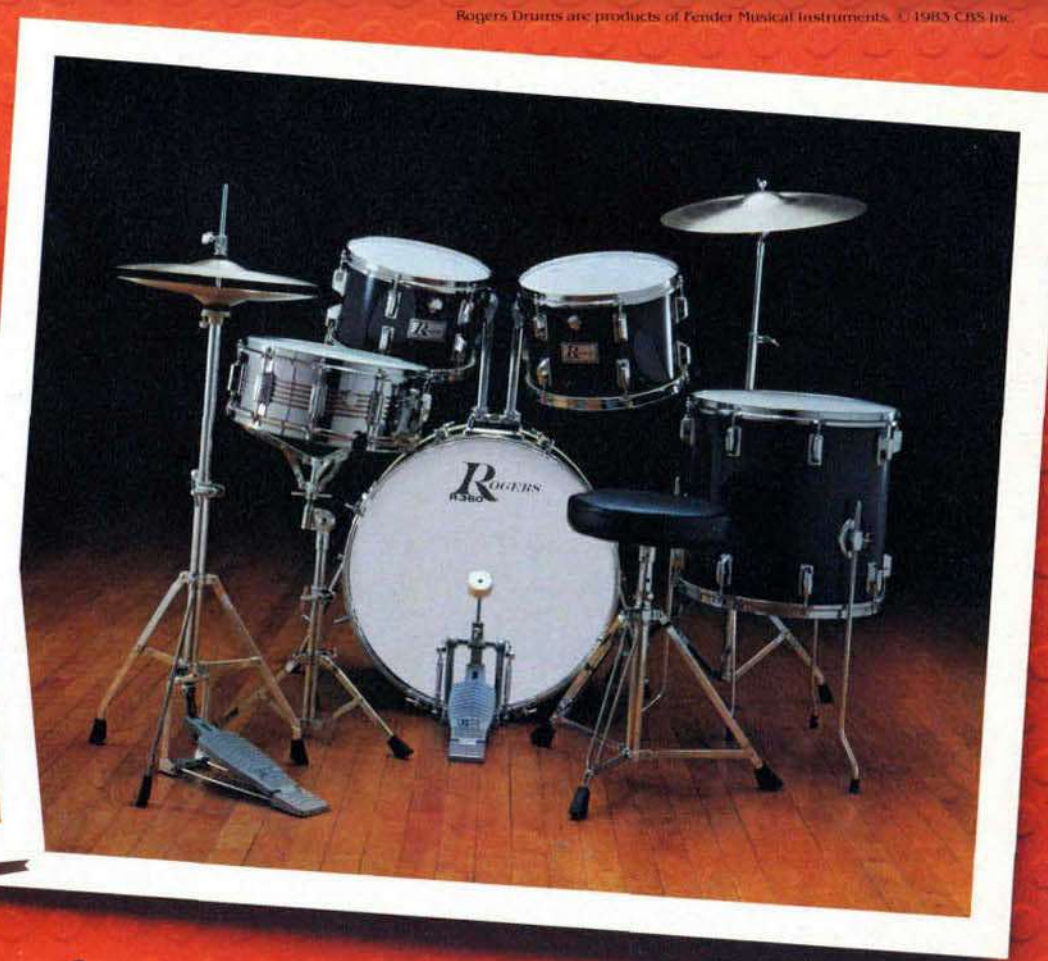

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ASK A PRO

GREGG BISSONETTE

Photo by George Denny

Q. Could you give me a breakdown of the bass pedal, sticks and heads that you use to achieve your crisp sound with Maynard's band?

Gus Nuson
Portland, OR

A. The bass pedal is the DW 5002 *Double Bass that I've been using since before they were on the market. Both left and right pedals can have the chain drive adjusted to feel exactly the same. I use wooden ball beaters on both pedals and shave them flat so that they'll hit the head flush, giving me a lot of smack and a fat sound without denting the head. The left pedal fits perfectly next to the footboard of my hi-hat so that I move easily between them. Nine months on the road and no problem!*

I like the Vic Firth American Classic 5 B's *for their weight and balance. They hold up through hard playing and all styles. I use a coated Remo* Ambassador *on the snare. On all the toms, 8" through 15", I use* Pinstripes *on top and* Black Dots *on the bottom. I try to keep the drums wide open with no muffling except for a patch of paper towel,1 1/2" by 3 1/2", on my snare. In the bass drum, I lay a light blanket against the* Pinstripe *batter head. I try to make sure that the drums are in tune with themselves by tapping with my finger near each lug to get the same pitch. Toms are tuned relatively from high to low, and the snare is adjusted loosely, to get a fat funk sound when hit dead center, but tight enough to roll on and get good rimshots.*

TOMMY ALDRIDGE

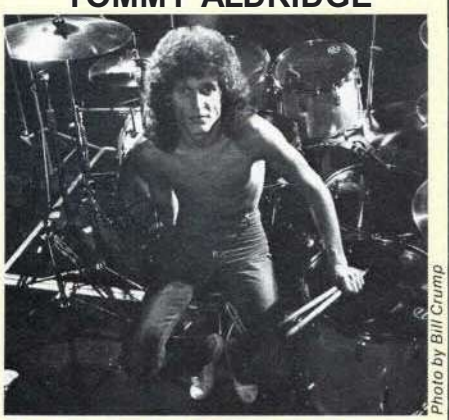

Photo by Bill Crump

Q. I know that balance is a key element in playing double bass drums. How can I achieve balance? Do I sit high or low? Do I position the bass drums on an angle or more in front of me?

Devin Werbel
Brooklyn, NY

A. I sit low. I've always sat low. I have better action with my feet if I sit low. Achieving balance just comes from playing and having your drumkit set up to where you don't have to get really out of wack, or off to one side or the other. You should have everything close enough to where you can reach it without overextending yourself, especially with two bass drums.

GARY CHAFFEE

Q. I am interested in extending myself in polymeters and rhythms. I read that you taught Steve Smith and Vinnie Colaiuta and I wanted to know if you have any books out that might help me get this together.

Wayne Berry
Nashville, TN

A. I've published the Patterns *series, three books of material that I use to teach. The first book,* Rhythm and Meter, *offers an extensive section on odd meters, subdivided meters and meters in "one." It also utilizes single-note to 8th-note rhythms over one beat, and polyrhythms over two, three and four beats. The pieces are to be played initially on snare, and then there are ways outlined to apply them to the drumset.*

The second book, Stickings, *is about sticking and articulation along with rhythm and meter material from* Rhythm and Meter. *This is basically what Vinnie was doing with Frank Zappa's band.*

Book three, Time Functioning, *is all drumset oriented, involving rock time functioning and new phrasing concepts. All of the books can be ordered through me at 30 Laval Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136.*

MICHAEL SHRIEVE

Photo by Rick Malkin

Q. On the Santana album, *Borboleta,* you did some fantastic drumming. How did you accomplish that sound in "Promise of a Fisherman"? How did you coordinate yourself with the other percussionists?

Ahmed Tawako
Cairo, Egypt

A. I would usually tune my tom-toms somewhat high and open with no muffling. During that period we were experiencing, very much, an affinity with Brazilian music and listening to a lot of it. So much of Brazilian music is part of a percussion ensemble that, as such, you would think of yourself as one instrument in what would be considered a drum orchestra. Each person plays a rhythm. Combined, they add up to the total sound. In playing this music, you would always consider yourself one part in a whole. Everything together is the rhythm behind the music. You tune your drums in relation to the other percussionists. Often these kinds of rhythms are played light and fast, and there's a certain touch that's required. It's very melodic drumming and very musical drumming. So there's no reason to bash the drums. You have to think of them more as melodic instruments playing rhythm.

In 1974, when Borboleta *was released, I was playing Gretsch drums —8 x 12 and 9x13 mounted toms, a* 76 x *16 floor tom and a 22" bass drum. The cymbals were all Paiste—14" hi-hats, an 18" crash and a 22" ride cymbal with three rivets that I put on one side myself. I was using Remo* Ambassador *coated heads on top and Remo clear* Ambassadors *on the bottom.*

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CARL

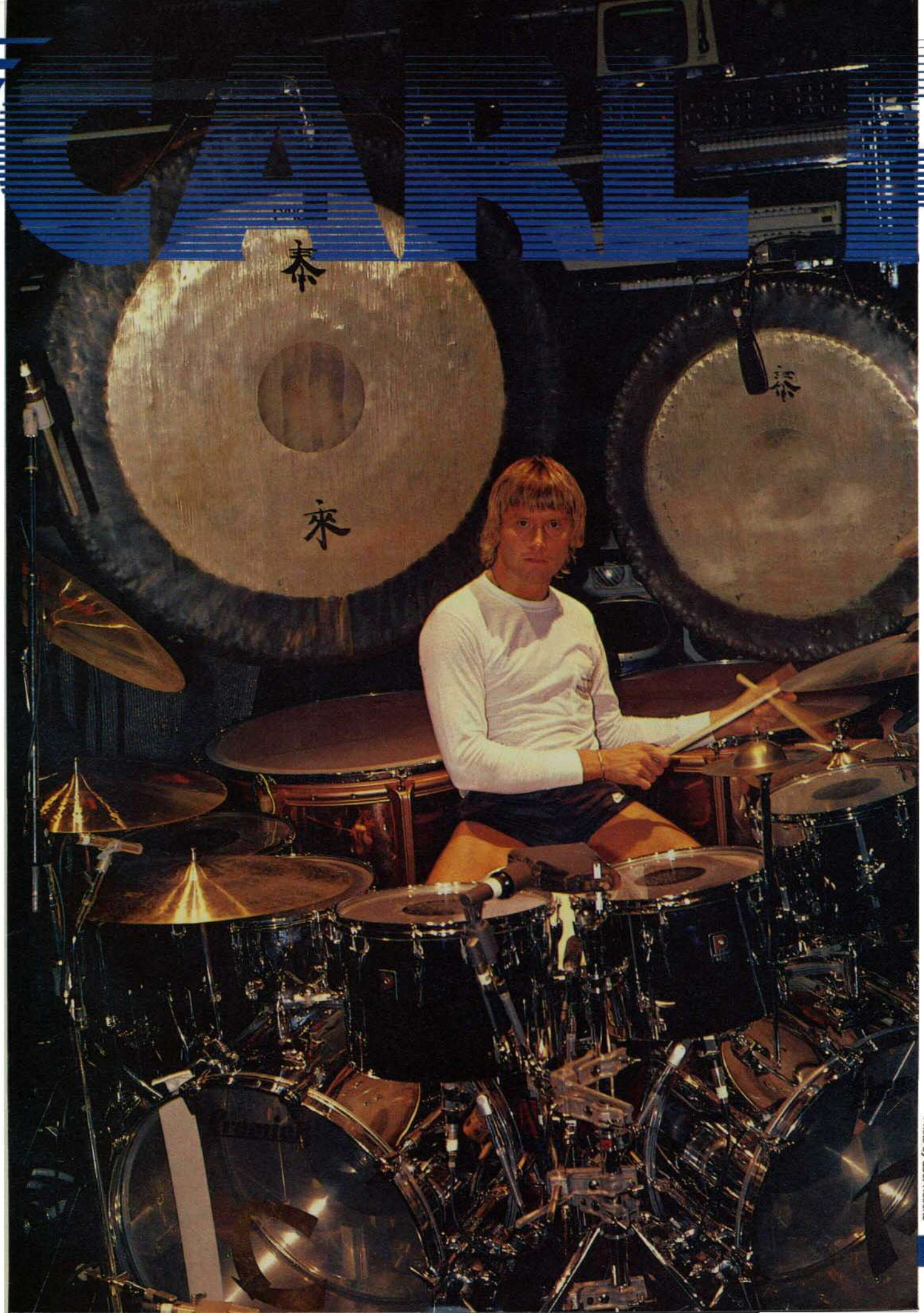


Photo by Ebet Roberts

PALMER

by
Rick
Mattingly

You would have thought that Carl Palmer had never seen New York City before. "I can'! believe this traffic! The only reason I got here at all is because]jumped out of the cab a couple of blocks from here and walked the rest of the way. " He didn't seem to be mad, or frustrated, or even slightly irritated by the delay caused by the traffic. Rather, he seemed amazed, ft was as if he had just discovered some incredible new fact about New York, and he was fascinated by it.

The question is, how can Carl Palmer be fascinated by anything? Surely by now the man has been everywhere and seen everything. As a member of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, he toured the world, sold millions of records, and enjoyed all of the many benefits of success. And now he's doing it all over again with Asia. After all these years, he has every right to be jaded, as are many rock musicians who have been around awhile.

Instead, Palmer enjoys life with a wide-eyed innocence more befitting a 23-year-old than someone who's 33. But it's that ability to approach things as if he's doing them for the first time which has enabled him to remain fresh in a business where the emphasis is always on the new. For example, after all of the ''supergroups" who have failed, no one expects much from a group made up of seasoned players. But the problem with many of those groups was that the members were more interested in trying to maintain the success they already had, than in trying to create something new and make it grow. Carl didn 't take that attitude when he joined Asia. He was willing to forget about past successes and approach Asia as if it were the first band he had ever been in. Rather than trying to project his "drum star" reputation, he chose to let Asia's music dictate his drumming, and if the songs called for a more basic type of drumming than he had been known for in the past, then so be it. Except, of course, for his solo.

Plenty of drummers do solos, but only certain ones become known as "legendary" soloists. Carl Palmer is one of those few. His solo is well thought out, combining drum pyrotechnics, theatrics, musicality, and a little show-biz. Yes, a lot of it is calculated, but it's still exciting and never fails to bring an audience to its feet. One may wonder how a player can keep something like that fresh every night, and make it exciting rather than mechanical. In Carl's case it's easy. He just does it the way he does everything else in his life—like it's the first time.

RM: When you did your previous MD interview, you had just started the group PM. What happened to that group, and how did you end up in Asia?

CP: The group PM was started in the year 1979, if I recall. The group made one album on Ariola records, which wasn't released in America; it was only released in Europe. The band had five people—four Americans, and I was the only English member. I put the band together, and we had a reasonable amount of success in Europe, but we never played any concerts—we only did a couple of television shows. The record sales were very, very slow, but I didn't feel disheartened; I didn't feel it was actually necessary to take the band on the road and perform, because the record sales didn't warrant it. In rock music, if you don't have the record sales, it's pointless to go out and perform. If I hadn't made money in the past, I would have had to do that just to live, but to go and play just to eat just seems irrelevant to me because I like to promote a product when I play and I think it's a better way of doing things. So that band never actually toured, and then I broke it up a year or 14 months later.

I then carried on recording on my own, and I was working with a guy named Mike Oldfield. I recorded a couple of pieces with him which were for my solo album. One side had already been recorded—it was a concerto for percussion, which I've had recorded now for about seven years. It's a classical piece and it shows me playing all of the tuned percussion family—vibraphone and marimbas. That was recorded with the London Philharmonic. On the other side of the album I was going to put a sort of electronic classical music—not a concerto again, but just small sections. Mike Oldfield seemed to be the ideal person for me to work with. Anyway, I recorded a couple of pieces with him, and then he called me up one day and asked me if he could use one of them for an album of his, and I said "Fine." The piece was called ''Mount Teidi" on his album *Five Miles Out,* and it was named after a volcano where I live.

Photo by Ebet Roberts

It was during that period—that would be the beginning of '82—I took some time off, stayed at home, did a little bit of studying and what-have-you, and tidied up some of my personal business. It was around then that I got a phone call asking me if I would like to come and play in a band that had Steve Howe in it. Well, I'd known Steve for a long time, and I'd also known the manager for a long time. I came along and played; there was John Wetton, Steve Howe and myself—there was no keyboard player. I wasn't too happy with that because I feel that with the amount of technology available today, not to have a keyboard player is a bad idea. So I suggested that we have a keyboard player, and Steve Howe, having played with Geoff Downes in the last configuration of Yes, suggested that we try him. It seemed good to me, so the four of us played and we decided to be a band after about a week because it felt good. So that's the history up to when Asia began.

"WE HAVE TRIED TO CREATE A SOUND COLLECTIVELY RATHER THAN PROJECT AS INDIVIDUALS. I WAS IN A BAND WHERE I COULD DO NOTHING ELSE *BUT* PROJECT AS AN INDIVIDUAL FOR EIGHT OR NINE YEARS, SO I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THAT."

RM: People have assumed that, given the reputations of the four of you, Asia had it made right from the start.

CP: Well, as you know, that's a completely false impression. It just doesn't work that way. You've got to realize that when the average age of the band is mid-30's, you're considered as a dinosaur and a big risk within the music industry today, regardless of how good a player you are. You know, we could all make a living in a studio, but I've never been someone who wanted to be paid a wage; I've always wanted a percentage of something. If I can see a percentage grow, I become happier. Fortunately enough, the attitude in America is slightly different than in Europe. It's like when George Best came to America years ago to play for the Cosmos, or whoever he played for. He was enjoyed by the American public who thought he was a great soccer player—and he is—but in England he was thought of as being too old and finished. Here in America there's an attitude like, "Well, if you were good once, you should be able to be good twice. So what if you're slightly older?"

We managed to get tied in with Geffen Records. David Geffen heard what we were trying to do. He loved the idea—the musical concept that we had—and he immediately said, "Okay, let's do something." We decided to have an objective view within the group, i.e., a producer, who was an English chap named Mike Stone. We worked on the first album for about five months, and the record company was happy with it. We took nothing for granted, like, "We've got a name so we're going to be okay." You must realize that if you *have* got a name, you can only use it once. There's a list as long as my arm of "supergroups" who have got together and been gigantic failures. I always say anyway that I don't care who's a super musician and who's not. I'd rather hear bad musicians playing good songs, than great musicians playing terrible music. And a lot of people you'd classify as "supergroup" musicians don't play good music, whether it be the brand of music I choose to play, or fusion/rock, or whatever.

We have tried to create a sound collectively rather than project as individuals. I was in a band where I could do nothing else *but* project as an individual for eight or nine years, so I've had enough of that. I can go a different way now, and Asia is that, for me.

So that's what happened with the record company and internally, with the band getting the music together. As far as dates were concerned, I decided that with Asia my personal view would be *not* to come to America and play for 5,000 people, or even dream of trying, even though we could have possibly sold that many tickets, with or without an album, first time around, just from the pure intrinsic value. I thought it would be better to come in and do the complete extreme—play in very small places, say 1,500 seats. Two thousand seats was the maximum for the first six weeks. I recall playing in an 1100 seater in Upstate New York.

RM: Having been in a group that was used to playing such places as Madison Square Garden, wasn't that a letdown?

CP: For me, it was perfect, because I didn't suddenly want to be in Madison Square Garden. I wanted to build it as though I'd never been in a group before, and this was my first time, and I was doing it from scratch. On a concert level, it's like a house with a good foundation. Once you burn out a few promoters, it's impossible to go back. So we worked for about six weeks, and during that time, our album took right off and went to Number One, stayed there for a couple of weeks, dropped back down, then went back to Number One for seven weeks. By that time, we had moved up to 5,000-7,000 seaters.

Now, our new album entered the charts at Number 29, and it's Number Five in the English charts, and our single is strong. But we're still taking it very, very easy, as far as where we play and the amount of people we play to. We know that we can't just walk in and sell out 18,000 seats. We know it's possible to do between 8,000 and 10,000, and feel comfortable about it. That's fine; it doesn't have to be more. Even with the success we had with our first album and the success we're having with this album, the marketplace is so congested with groups touring, it makes it a little difficult. So we really do plan the movement of Asia, because we really don't want to waste any time. I think that's because we are all slightly older, and we don't want to just go around in a circle in a pointless way. We'd like to go around America, and every time we play, it will actually mean something.

RM: Could you describe the difference between being the drummer for Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and being the drummer in Asia?

CP: Well, Emerson, Lake & Palmer was basically an instrumental group doing adaptations of classical pieces which we would arrange for three people, with the one lead instrument being the keyboard. So I basically had to play a role of not only keeping time, but having to play a lot of unison passages with the keyboards, just to make it sound as fat as possible. Having the technique I've got, it was real easy for me to fall into that and go with the flow of that. Plus, there was a classical environment there which suited me because I'd studied with James Blades at the Royal Academy and Gilbert Webster at the Guild Hall, so that was a perfect setting for me, musically, at the time.

The job I have today is a lot simpler than that; I would say it's probably 50% less pressure. I think the equivalent would be being in Emerson, Lake & Palmer as opposed to being in the Beatles. Ringo Starr did not have a very big job to do, but what he did had to be right. That's basically what I've got here. Okay, the music is a little more arranged than the Beatles, but I'm just trying to make the point that it is *that* different. And quite honestly, I've never been in a group that has played this type of music before, so I find it very fresh and rewarding. I still do my solo; I still have that element of release. But I enjoy creating an overall group sound much more now, because in the past, it *was Emerson, Lake & Palmer,* and we all did our *own* thing. That's great too, but I think it's time to change. I like the attitude of trying to get an overall big sound for a group, with the individuals playing for a piece of music rather than for themselves. I think it's great, *providing* each individual has a chance to stretch out on stage. I will always play a drum solo in any band I'm in, because if I didn't do that, I would feel very strange. I can play less than I used to in the music, but the time comes when I have to say, "Hey, I do this too." So it works out real good right now; I have the best of both worlds, and I'm doing something that I've never done before. I've never been in a sort of pop/rock group before, and judging by the amount of albums we've sold, there must be something there, because people don't have a lot of money these days to buy records and go to concerts. So there has to be some quality on the records which people are seeing. The intrinsic value of having these four, so-called "famous" musicians from England playing together soon wears off if the product isn't there. I mean, there are many famous musicians from groups—who I don't really wish to name—who can't get arrested playing on their own. It seems such a shame because it's a waste that they haven't gotten to the train of thought where they say, "Well, let's get a group happening; a *group* sound. Personal identities can be injected later."

RM: Did the audiences accept the "new" Carl Palmer, or did they expect you to play more?

CP: I think they accept me, yes. I think if I didn't play a solo at some stage, then I'd be cheating the people who have followed my progression through the years. I'd also be cheating myself. I think people understand that I've never played what's called "four on the floor" in all my life, until I joined this band, but I think people realize that there comes a time when you have to do that in certain things. In the music in this band, sometimes I have to do that; there's nothing else that sounds as good. People might say, "Well, you could be more original." I've tried swapping things around, but at the end of the day, it's just "thump, thump, thump" on the floor which *works.* The art *is* in simplicity, as you've always heard. I only play "four on the floor" if I feel it's needed. If I can get out of it, I will. But in several cases in this group, I've not been able to get out of that. I felt that it needed *that,* and that's it. Closed door. Get on and do it.

RM: Drummers have to remember that they can't play just to impress all of the drummers in the audience, because most of the people in the audience are *not* drummers.

CP: Right. I think that's why the drum solo is there. It's a release for me, and it's for the people who enjoy that type of thing. I'll tell you quite honestly, I've timed my drum so-

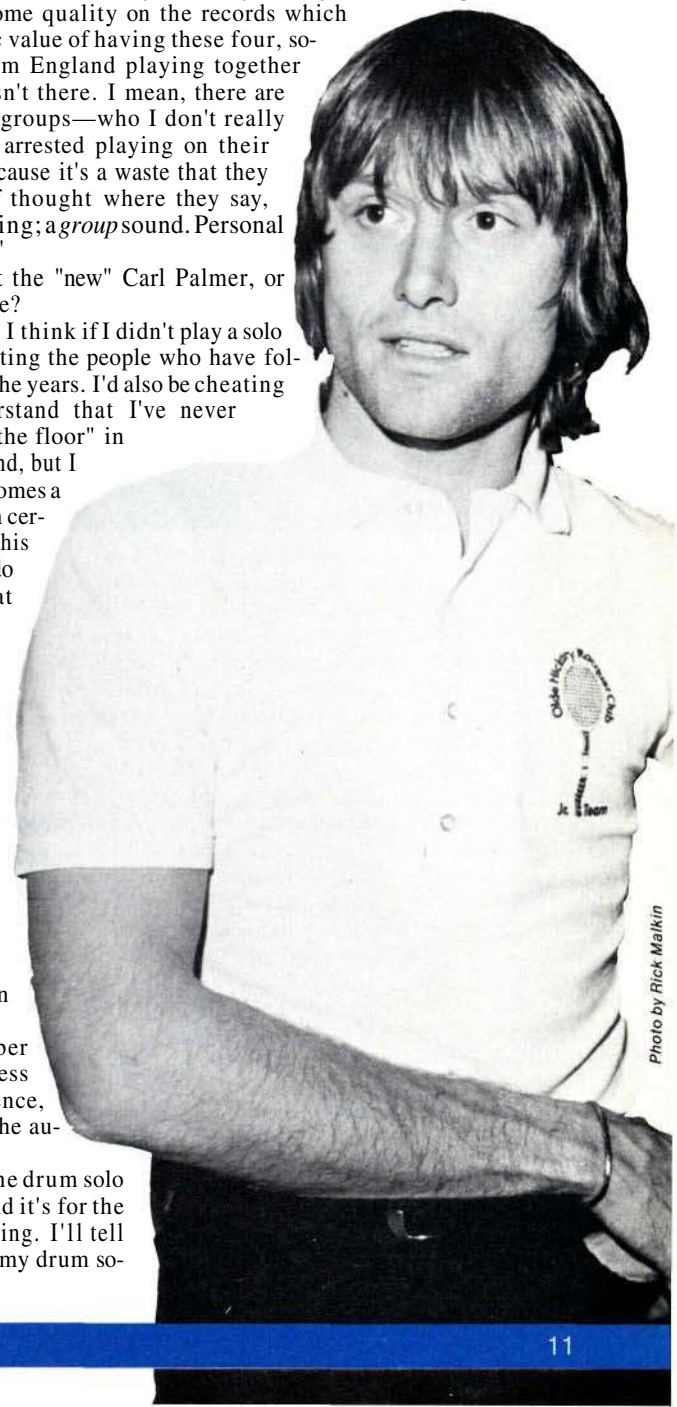


Photo by Rick Malkin

Photo by Ebet Roberts

los, and I play roughly 7 1/2-minute drum solos, and in that solo, I play about 2 1/2 minutes for me. During the other five minutes, I basically perform as an entertainer. I actually have a complete programmed drum solo, which happens the same every night as far as the "landmarks" are concerned. There is a certain time I play the tambourine, a certain time when I play the gongs, a certain time I juggle, a certain time I play my electronic drums, and a certain time I play my timpani. In between all of those things, there are little bits and pieces that I do for myself. But all of the things have been put together in such a way as to gain the most audience reaction. That's the way I like to do it; it's almost like a classical pianist with a cadenza that's completely worked out, leaving small areas along the way for ad-libbing, but not having something which is ad-libbed from beginning to end. I like to guarantee a build, and a certain amount of audience participation—clapping with me, or whatever. I think that's real important, so that's how I program what I do. So like I said, there's about 2 1/2 minutes for the drummers in the room who have come to check that part of it out. But the rest of it—a lot of people could play it if they could piece it together the way I do.

"I'M A GREAT THIEF, YOU KNOW. I LIKE TO LIFT STUFF AND PLAY IT BETTER. THE REAL TRICK IS TAKING WHATEVER YOU'VE STOLEN AND TRYING TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT WITH IT . . ."

RM: Interestingly enough, Bob Moses told me recently that he feels that most jazz could benefit by more structure and arranging, because not too many people are capable of improvising for long periods of time without getting boring.

CP: I think that's true. I can truthfully say that I could sit up there and improvise for 7 1/2 minutes, and it would be interesting, but it wouldn't go down as well as what I have now. If you could see how I write out my drum solos, I mean, it's almost put together like theater. I even have a time when I take off my shirt; I take it off every night at the same time, and it's when the audience is clapping. This has nothing to do with drumming; it's the entertainment part, but when they see me do that, they start clapping even more, and that sets me up for a little bit of ad-libbing. That really juices me up to play *real* well. So I'm getting something from them, as well as supplying them with something that they want to see.

A lot of great performers like Pete Townshend and Keith Emerson have said things like, "It's only the theatrical stunts that people remember." It's true, and it's a shame. They always remember Townshend doing his windmill. This guy is also a great guitar player, but they remember him for his windmill. I think probably that's what Gene Krupa was all about when he first started out. I don't mean to call them gimmicks exactly, but they're theatrical—that's a nicer word—if they draw the audience into you, and then make you play. The audience doesn't actually understand what flam accents are, or flam paradiddles, or ratamacues. They don't know, and I'm not there as an educator; I'm there as an entertainer. But while I'm entertaining them, they've got to let me get off a little too. So I try and slot it in, and I think that taking a third of the time for me is not extravagant. I'm giving them five minutes, because they bought the ticket. It's fair.

RM: They might remember the theatrics, but if there's no musicianship to back it up, it's worthless. Plenty of people can out-windmill Pete Townshend, but . . .

CP: But they didn't do it first. Originality is something. To me, originality means much more than somebody who's a great copier. I'd rather hear a terrible band who's playing their own songs, than a great cover band. Something that's original is something that's unique. If a guy does do as many windmills, or does juggle like I do, or whatever, was he doing it before me? Juggling is a poor example, because drummers have juggled for years, but I think originality is important.

RM: Even if someone else did it first, it needs the music to back it up.

CP: Yeah, both have to run parallel. You can't *be just* an entertainer; you've got to be musical, for sure.

RM: You mentioned that Asia wanted a producer to get an objective opinion. A lot of people who have been around awhile feel that they know what they're doing, and they don't need anyone else.

CP: Well, I disagree. My personal thought is that when you have four people, having an objective point of view is worth a lot. Also, it took a lot of pressure off us. We didn't have to get involved with the recording of it; we could concentrate on the playing. Once we were happy with the playing, then we could get involved on his side, and say, "Well, we feel we need a bit more of this," or "Could you change the EQ on this?" or whatever. So I think it's a real good thing.

RM: When I first heard your album, I was struck with how much *sound* there was. Every crack was

Photo by Ebet Roberts

filled.

CP: There's a lot of orchestration. That's part of the thing about four musicians going for a collective sound, more than trying to project as great soloists all of the time. I think it pays off, myself. We do have a *group* identity, and I think that's important. I think the public likes to see a group, playing as a group. They see a family; they see a unit. I think the days of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and all these groups of *great* musicians ... so what? There are lots of great musicians, but are there great *bands?* I'd think the most fulfilling thing for a musician would be to be in a great *band,* going after the same goal.

RM: How does the group put all of that sound together? Do you rehearse all of that beforehand, or do you build those arrangements in the studio as you go along?

CP: We have roughly six weeks of rehearsal prior to the first recording date. During that time we discuss basic bass and drum arrangements, and basic keyboard arrangements in conjunction with guitar and vocal backing. We also go through the overdubbing process—what could be distributed between organ, or synthesizer, or guitar, or whatever. We also talk about things I could do on top from an electronic point of view. I was always a bit reluctant to do that, but now I've succumbed. So in a six-week period that would all take place. Then we go into the studio and lay down backing tracks, only really recording, depending on the piece of music, bass and drums, and maybe one other part—a

continued on page 40

Miking Carl's Kit

1. Bass drum (L)	Electro-Voice RE-20
2. Bass drum (R)	Electro-Voice RE-20
3. Snare (top)	AKG 451 EB
4. Snare (bottom)	AKG 451 EB
5. Hi-Hat	Shure SM 81
6. Rack tom 1	Shure SM 56
7. Rack tom 2	Shure SM 56
8. Rack tom 3	Shure SM 56
9. Rack tom 4	Shure SM 56
10. Floor tom 1	Beyer M88
11. Floor tom 2	Beyer M88
12. Ride cymbal	AKG 414
13. Overhead (L)	Sennheiser 416
14. Overhead (R)	Sennheiser 416
15. Cowbell	Shure SM 56
16. Timpani	Sennheiser 421
17. Gong (L)	Sennheiser 421
18. Gong (R)	Sennheiser 421

The Simmons drums go directly into the mixing board. Miking by Dave Natale—Clair Bros. Audio

Simon Kirke

In 1970 "AII Right Now" by the band Free became a hit, and almost an anthem. A t the same time the solid, sparse, forceful but beautiful drumming of Simon Kirke became a standard by which the performances of other drummers playing in a similar style came to be judged.

Simon went on to become a member of Bad Company, a band which has retained the same personnel since its inception ten years ago, and has influenced many of the "heavy" bands formed since.

When I went to meet Simon at the offices of Swan Song Records in London, I was half expecting to meet a hollow-cheeked individual with lank hair and a lean, hungry manner about him. I could not have been more wrong! I had never seen Simon live and it had been over two years since I had seen him on television. I was envisioning an image derived from a publicity photo taken while Simon was in the middle of a pretty strenuous gig, which caused him to lose (as he told me later) between three and four pounds in body fluid. Nobody could look their most photogenic under those conditions!

Simon is not a large man, but he is compact, muscular and very fit. Coupled with this, there is a confidence and quiet authority, creating an impression similar to that of a young athletic instructor.

Readers in all countries will understand what it is like for a 16-year-old to leave a remote country area to seek fame and fortune as a musician in "The Big City. " It takes great courage and determination, and if you are to be one of the few to succeed, talent as well. Simon Kirke originally came to London at the age of 16. He was one who succeeded.

SK: I first became interested in playing drums when I was about 12. I saw a television program called *All That Jazz* and I became interested in what the drummer was doing. I just seemed to be drawn towards the drums and the sound that they made.

We lived in a very rural area, out on the Welsh border. There were no shops, and it was miles from any towns. I had to get my own drumsticks by cutting them out of a hedge, and the first sticks I made were about six inches long. I had no idea how long drumsticks should be. The first drum I ever owned didn't even have a name on it. It was a snare drum on a wooden stand with an arm on it and a little 8" splash cymbal.

SG: I remember those. Did it have a plastic shell and plastic fittings?

SK: Right. Made to look like mother of pearl. Anyway, I used to practice on this in my bedroom making an awful din, until I got my first kit, which was a Gigster—in red sparkle. I wish I had kept all my old kits now, but I wasn't well off so I had to exchange one kit for another as I went along. The next one was a Premier kit, which for me was the big time. Wow! A blue-sparkle Premier kit!

While I was still at school, I had a band and we were quite big in the area. We were *the* local chaps and were called the Maniacs. Now that I come to think about it, I did have a rather unusual schooling before that time. I teamed up with another chap who had a "portable disco." We would go 'round the village halls. He would play records and I would play drums along with them. So I learned an awful lot during that time. I had to play foxtrots, the latest Beatles things, Elvis, and rock 'n' roll. That was a hell of an education.

SG: You had to learn the arrangements?

SK: Yes, but we didn't have practice sessions. I just went in cold, but after the first three or four gigs, I knew most of the records he would play. I think I learned to keep time doing those gigs. You know, with a group you could get away with murder, but playing to a record you had to keep time, especially when you were in front of two- or three-hundred people. We did quite well—nobody had seen anything like it; they were expecting the rest of the band to appear.

SG: Had you started to develop your own musical ideas yet?

SK: Well, I started getting interested in the blues. I formed a band called Heatwave around 1967. It was just about the time that the record by John Mayall's Bluesbreakers came out—the one with EricClapton.

SG: With Hughie Flint on drums.

SK: Hughie Flint, exactly, and John McVie, and John Mayall. I think it was the first time I had heard a drum solo. I'm sorry if you are reading this Hughie, but it was dreadful! It sounded like an explosion in a drum factory, or someone kicking his drums downstairs. That rather put me off solos, a trait which has stayed with me ever since.

SG: There probably wasn't much of a precedent for drum solos in that particular genre at the time.

SK: Yes, you are probably right. It just seemed to me that it was a self-indulgent solo. I think that a drum solo should be played for the audience, as well as for the music. The secret of a good solo is that it should be no more than three or four minutes, and it should contain a pulse or a rhythm. It can be polyrhythmic, but it must have a steady pulse to it so that the audience can get involved. Once you have got them going, you can go off on tangents if you like. Buddy Rich is a great example of that. Ginger Baker also; he would keep a pulse going and then work off it. But flashy, fast solos are self-destructive, I think. They don't serve much purpose at all.

SG: Like, when does it cease to be music and become a sport?

SK: Exactly. A single-stroke roll can be marvelous—you see someone's biceps standing out—but it serves no purpose; it is just an exercise to strengthen your arms and shoulders. But if you get a nice rhythm going . . . When Bad Company was touring I was forced into doing a solo. I had not done a drum solo since my school days, but the lads in Bad Company said, "You should do a solo for about three or four minutes." I learned an awful lot from it. I would like to think that my solos were successful, purely because I involved the audience in that metronomic pulse. When I could see that their heads were going, I knew that they were locked in with the beat, and then I could go off on a tangent. But enough about solos.

SG: Okay. So you came to London in search of . . . ?

SK: I wanted to be rich, famous, and all the rest of it—no two ways about it. I was lucky in that I knew what I wanted to do at an early age, which was to be a drummer.

SG: Did you have any parental opposition?

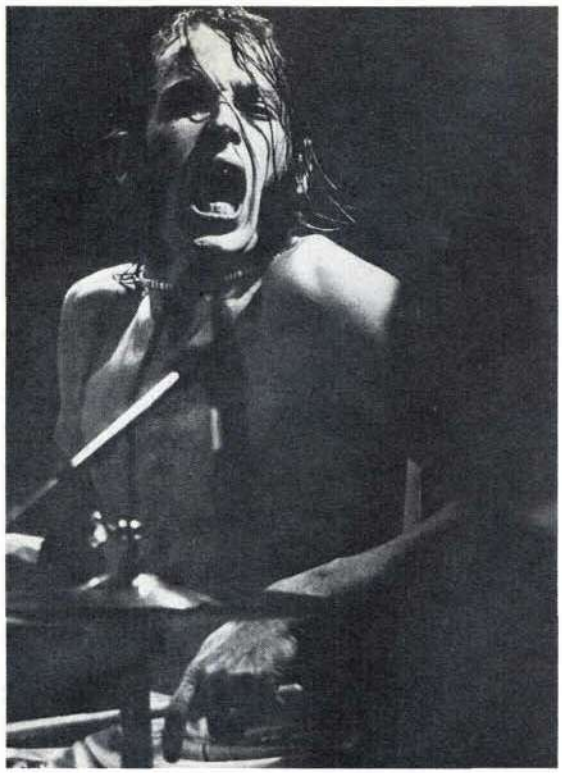
SK: My mum gave me a lot of support, although my dad wasn't too keen. Now, being a father myself, I can understand. The music business is not the safest of businesses in which to make money or have a secure future. So I said, rather naively, "Look, give me two years, and if after two years I haven't done anything, I will come back, go to college, and become a doctor or a lawyer." But as luck would have it, during those two years I met Paul Kossof and got involved in Free. So I never did go to college.

SG: Do you still consider the desire to be rich and famous a good motivation for going into drumming?

SK: The "rich and famous" quote, I guess, was coming from a 14-year-old kid. Now that I'm 34, I do it because I love drumming; I get a kick out of it. It's a very exhilarating experience. It's a good outlet for my creative energies and I just like to make a hell of a lot of noise! It's very therapeutic. You have to keep in shape because it can be quite exhausting sometimes. But I find that the more I get into a tour, the better I become. My reflexes get faster. Once you learn all of the tunes and you know where the breaks are, it all starts to come naturally. That's when I really enjoy it. You know the feeling that you get when you get off a good gig? That's one of the reasons why I do it—for that feeling.

SG: How did Free come about?

SK: I was in a band called Black Cat Bones with Paul Kossof. He knew Paul Rodgers, and we were all a bit disenchanted with the music scene and the bands we were in. So we decided to form a new band and we were lucky enough to get Andy Fraser on bass. He had been with John Mayall. They both knew Alexis Korner, and when Andy came along to see us, Alexis came too. It was on his 40th birthday. That I do remember. He'd had a band with Ginger Baker and, I think, Graham Bond called Free At Last, but it never really got off the ground. He suggested the name Free to us. We



liked it and so we adopted it. Alexis gave us a lot of help; we went on the road with him. We would open the show, he would do a spot on his own, and then we would all play together.

SG: This was in 1968, the time of the blues "boom" in England. There were lots of bands starting up at about this time.

SK: The ones that come to mind are Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, Savoy Brown, and Ten Years After. I always used to be first in line at the Marquee Club in those days. I really liked Aynsley Dunbar, who had a band called Retaliation. At that time, John Mayall had umpteen musicians coming and going, and the musicians who left Mayall would form their own bands. But getting back to the drumming, Aynsley Dunbar did some things which have stuck in my mind ever since. He did some marvelous solos, his bass drum work was absolutely phenomenal, and he swung! He really had a good sense of time. One of the best drummers I know of is Aynsley Dunbar. I felt like packing up and going home when I saw what sort of competition there was. Initially I was a bit downcast, but I thought, "I'm young, and I can learn and get better." I don't know whether I did, but I molded my own style. I've got my own style now. I can't do the things that Aynsley Dunbar does on his bass drum, but I don't really want to anymore.

Photo by Neal Preston

When you start off playing you have to listen, and you copy what you hear and what you think is good. My "Guv'nor" for all time is Al Jackson; his snare drum and his sense of timing were just unbeatable. Every drummer has a "Guru" and mine is Al Jackson, closely followed by Buddy Rich. They say, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing!" Mr. Rich can certainly swing.

SG: You influenced a lot of drummers with your playing on "All Right Now." The bass drum in particular was outstanding. I think it is the spacing of everything else which allows it to show through.

SK: Yes, definitely. You see, I sometimes like playing four to the bar on the hi-hat instead of the usual eight. By doing that on "All Right Now," I found that there was a lot more room for the bass drum and snare to come through. I didn't design it that way; that was just the way it happened. It could have been because we took that track about 20 times, and after all those takes I was so bloody tired I couldn't play more than four on it. I suppose it was influential. I have always tried to keep my drumming sparse, because I think that the drummer should play the songs with the band, adding light and shade. The cymbals and drums should be used as instruments, and not just as things to hit.

SG: The drumming in a band like Free was more important for the overall sound than in many other bands, because you had a very spacy sound with no rhythm guitar or keyboard.

SK: Yeah, right. Free's sound was pretty sparse. During the first year of their existence, there was a big change in my style. I think it was when we ceased doing old blues standards and started doing our own songs. When *we did Fire and Water* In 1970, which was the third album, the one with "All Right Now" on it, it was a time in my professional career which meant a lot to me. There was a big breakthrough in my style; I seemed to throw off all the things which had seen me through the early days, and out of that came my own style.

SG: In those days the drums were not normally miked, but the music was still pretty loud. You had to be heard through all the 100-watt stacks. I was talking to a friend last night who said that you used to work bloody hard.

SK: [Laughs] Yes, and I still do. That's how I get the sound. It's because I hit the drums very hard. You know, I have been told that I lose three to four pounds a night in perspiration.

SG: Could that be checked?

SK: Yes. When we were on our last tour of Europe with Bad Company, we were in Frankfurt and a team of doctors were doing tests to see which professions use up the most calories during a working day. I think they tested a doctor, a coal miner, a typist, and a rock drummer. That was me. They wired me up with electrodes and checked my heart, my pulse and my respiration. They also checked my weight before and after playing. When I came off, I was my usual sweaty self, and I found out that I had lost just over four pounds in body fluid. It was an easy night; it wasn't the toughest gig of my life but those needles were going all over the place as if there was an earthquake or something. I subsequently found out that I came out on top of the list; in an hour and a half I had burned up something like 4,000 calories, or whatever. Second to me was a coal miner on an eight-hour shift. That shows how much I work. I said, "Lads, that was an easy gig. You should weigh me after a hard one!"

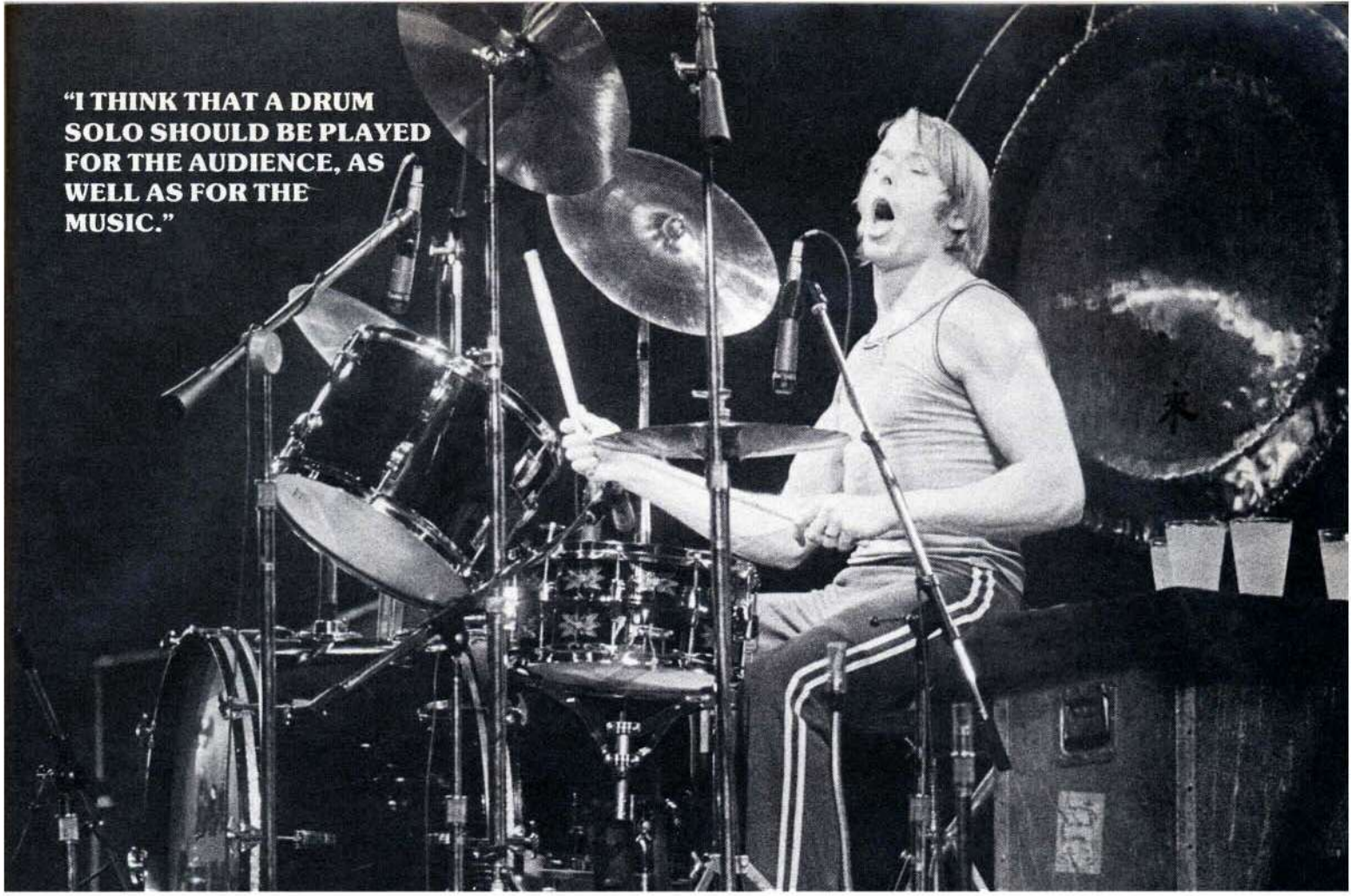
SG: How do you keep yourself in shape for this? Do you practice a lot?

SK: Yes, I do practice now and again. I'm not a daily practice man. I do it mainly to keep my muscles supple, because when we go on tour, I don't want to be in agony for the first few nights. I keep fit though. I *don't jog;* that's a vastly overrated activity, and dangerous too. I have weights, and I play squash for my reflexes. With the weights, I do weight lifting, not body building. This way I keep my shoulders and arms powerful. Which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Am I built the way I am because I play like this, or do I play like this because of my build?

SG: Are there any specific things that you enjoy practicing?

SK: That's a very good question. I like to concentrate on press rolls. Apart from building you up, they're a good exercise for the

Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve



wrists. I do the occasional paradiddle, but it's like a Latin paradiddle. Also, I practice crossover rolls on the toms-toms. Then I put on a drum machine, and just play along with the rhythm and trade licks around it. It lasts for no more than half an hour to an hour.

SG: Have you ever had to work on your ability to keep time?

SK: No. I've been pretty well blessed with good timekeeping. Towards the end of a tour, I invariably slow down. The songs are not quite as sharp as I would like them to be. That's for an obvious reason—I'm just tired.

SG: Have you ever recorded with a click track?

SK: No, I can't do it. It just wouldn't be me. I think I'm like Charlie Watts—a little bit behind the beat, which I like. I did like the drummers with James Brown. He used two drummers, and they were right on the beat. They were lovely, but that's not my style.

SG: After Free split up, what happened next?

SK: Well, Koss and I decided to get another band together, make an album, and go on the road. On our travels we had met Tetsu Yamaouchi, who was a good bass player and a nice guy. We had also met Rabbit [John Bundrick]. He was with Johnny Nash at the time. We had seen him at a gig in Sweden, of all places. He was marvelous; he knocked us out! He was a good singer as well as being a good keyboard player, and he wrote some good songs. Working with him gave Koss and I more freedom than we'd had previously. We did the album *Kossof, Kirke, Tetsu and Rabbit*—I still think it's a good album. Unfortunately Koss had a drug problem. At that time, the drugs were starting to affect him. That band never got off the ground—never went on the road.

SG: Paul Kossof's drug problem eventually killed him.

SK: Sadly, yes. His body gave up.

SG: Was it then that you renewed your association with Paul Rodgers?

SK: We had another crack at Free after that, but it was never quite the same. Free formed again and then broke up. That was it. I went off on a globe-trotting expedition, mainly to get away from the whole music scene. When I got back from my travels, I went over to see Paul Rodgers. In the meantime, he got to know Mick Ralphs from Mott The Hoople, and they were planning to form a band with Boz Burrell on bass. They asked me to play drums and we formed Bad Company.

SG: That was 1973, and you have been together ever since.

SK: That's right, ten years!

SG: You said that when Bad Company was formed, you decided to change your kit.

SK: Yes. When Bad Company started, I decided I wanted bigger drums. I had been using a 22" bass drum with 13" and 16" tom-toms, so I moved up a few inches to a 26" bass drum with 1 0 x 1 4 and 20 x 18 tom-toms.

SG: What make were they?

SK: Ludwig. I had an endorsement with Ludwig, but now my contract has run out. I can say that they were very good drums, but my favorite make is Gretsch. I've got some which I use in the studio. Practically all the Bad Company albums were done on a Gretsch kit; a small kit because you don't need big drums for recording.

SG: How small?

SK: A 22" bass drum, 13" tom, and 14x 14 floor tom. With the recording facilities these days, you just don't need a big kit. The only concession I make in the studio is to take off the front head for the engineer's peace of mind. When I was first told to do it, I told them to go and stuff themselves, but I realized soon afterwards that it was necessary to get the microphone inside the bass drum, facing the batter head.

I always keep the bottom skins on the drums. I think that you emasculate a drum if you take away the bottom head. All you can expect to get from that is a lot of volume. The bottom head provides the tone.

SG: On records your bass drum always sounds very full. It never came across as a single-head drum.

SK: Well, thanks! That's exactly what I set out to do. You use EQ

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Anthony J. Cirone

Organic Balance

by Rick Mattingly

I've always been intrigued by people who do a variety of things in their careers. My first drum teacher was such a person. He started out playing percussion in theaters during the final years of vaudeville. He then became a staff musician at a radio station, andfinally became the timpanist with a symphony orchestra. In addition to those jobs, he taught, and played variousfree-lance gigs. To me, that seemed like a more interesting way of life than working the same job from graduation until retirement. Also, it seemed to me that people who were involved in a variety of things had a certain depth that often was lacking in others.

And yet, there's also something to be said for making a commitment to a specific thing, and staying with it year after year. With the right attitude, a person does not have to get bored with that type of life, as one can constantly be stimulated by the opportunity to refine and develop the situation, and explore all of its subtleties. There's also the element of security offered by a consistent position, which is especially important in these economic times. For someone with family responsibilities, changing jobsfrom time to time can cause definite hardships.

As I went through college, I was considering my options, and wondering if it would be possible to combine the best of both—take a steady position (or two) so that I would have the opportunity to really develop something fully, and also have things on the side to give me the variety I wanted. Could Ifind a way to play, teach and write at the same time, and do justice to all of them? I sought out people who had such life-styles, and was advised that yes, it's possible, but it is definitely a "balancing act."

Anthony J. Cirone is a percussionist with the San Francisco Symphony, a teacher at San Jose State College, an author and publisher of method books and ensemble music, and an editor/advisorfor Belwin/Mills. He's also a devoted family man and, in his spare time (!), a gardener. Despite all of this, I hesitate to refer to his life as a "balancing act, "as that term implies a certain element of danger—one little shake and it can all come tumbling down. In contrast, Anthony Cirone's balance is the type which is synonymous with ''stability.'' His inner peace is not only evident, it's actually contagious. A friend of mine grew up with Cirone, and was always telling me what an influence Tony had been on him. Now I understand why. Of all the things Anthony Cirone is involved in, I'm not sure which one he considers his forte, because he does them all so well.

RM: How did you get involved with percussion?

AC: My mother tells me that when I was seven years old, she took me to a music store, asked me what I would like to play, and I ran over to the drums. So from the time I was seven years old, I took private lessons. I first studied at home with Jimmy Jerome, who was a local drummer in the Lyndhurst, New Jersey, area. Later, I went to the Gilio School of Music in Rutherford, and after that I went to Dorn & Kirschner in Newark, where I studied with a circus drummer. They all taught me reading and, of course, the drumset.

In those days I did it as any kid would—I enjoyed it, never thinking "This is my career" at all. I always practiced, and I guess I was serious enough. None of my friends were in music; I just did it on my own. But when I got to high school, it changed a little bit because then I met other kids who were also serious about music. Being in the band, we kind of formed an association, which is one of the wonderful things about being in music. Forget the career part of it —you form associations; you become part of something. I became part of the high school band. We also had a stage band within the Gilio School of Music and we'd play for the church dances, school functions, Kiwanis, and those kinds of things.

Then I had my first teacher who talked to me about studying seriously—Bill Laverack, who had graduated from Juilliard, and who had just come out of the Marine Band. Bill, seeing that I was serious, geared me towards auditioning for Juilliard.

The other important thing that happened to me was that I tried out for the New Jersey All-State Band in high school, and I made first snare drum. I think that told me, "Hey, I can do something! I must be at least pretty good." So those were my motivations, and the rest of it was sort of one thing following another, and being in the right place at the right time.

RM: When did you start studying mallets?

AC: I didn't start mallets until I was in high school and Bill Laverack started teaching me. My first instrument was the vibraphone. I was playing in a trio—piano, bass and drums—and we'd play weekends at local clubs. That's how I put myself through college. When I got my vibes, I began to learn to play tunes from a fake book. When I got to Juilliard I studied with Saul Goodman, and it was all classical training—he didn't teach the jazz end at all. On my own I went down to Henry Adler's studio and studied with Jack Jennings, who showed me four-mallet playing and taught me chord progressions so I was able to comp simple tunes. When we played on weekends, I began to bring my vibes. On one of the sets, instead of playing drumset, I'd just play vibes. I did that for years. I never really became that good at playing jazz. When I got into Juilliard, my emphasis went to classical music and I played the vibraphone and drumset just to make money. When I got to the West Coast after I graduated, I only did one job on drumset, and that was on New Year's Eve when the symphony was on strike and I happened to get a call.

RM: How did you get into the San Francisco symphony?

AC: Juilliard had a great tradition, and the tradition was Saul Goodman, of course. In those days, orchestras did not have the audition procedures that they have now. When a conductor wanted a percussionist, many of them went to Saul Goodman, because they had conducted the [New York] Philharmonic and knew Goodman personally. Goodman had sent Roland Kohloff out to San Francisco eight years before me. Roland, of course, was a fine player and Joseph Krips, the conductor, liked him. They were now looking for a new player because Joe Sinai was about to retire, so Krips again went to Goodman and said, "I need a percussionist." Goodman said, "I've got the man for you." I happened to be ready to graduate, I had taken a few auditions, and I had a little success in New York, so Goodman felt I was ready. I met Krips in New York. I didn't play a note for him; on Goodman's word he took me. So the next thing I knew I got a contract in the mail to start the following September. Now, I was graduating with my Bachelor's in June, and they offered me a contract for September. But I really wanted to get my Master's degree. I was looking at teaching as an alternative. So I wrote back to the manager and said, "I'd love to accept the job, but I'm not going to finish my schooling until a year from that time," and they said, "Okay, we'll wait." I couldn't even turn the job down! It was really fate. So they waited; they hired Joe Sinai an extra year, and then I went out with my wife and my six-month-old son. We put almost everything we owned in a station wagon and went out to San Francisco.

RM: Although you haven't kept up with

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drumset playing, you did have some background in it. Do you feel it affected your symphony playing?

AC: I'd have to say it did affect my playing. I think I gained a lot of experience that I wouldn't have had if I hadn't played drumset. All of my early playing was drumset, although I never became very good at it. I never studied with a serious drumset player. But obviously it was important because it built my technique up. By playing with other musicians I was learning to listen, and that is an important skill.

As far as other people are concerned, I think percussionists should have some control of drumset. Freelance players are going to be called on to do that at some point. It's such a specialized instrument that, usually, people who go into drumset do it in such a way that drumset is their whole thing. Their whole focus is on drumset, and they don't want to study the other instruments, which is equally wrong if you're going to be a freelance player, because you're limited in the work you can accept. I've seen this happen on jobs that I've been on—the drumset player has to play a little bell part, but he doesn't play bells. So they get one of the trumpet players to come over and play it. It doesn't look too good, you know? A drummer should be able to do that. I'm not talking about "Porgy and Bess"; I'm talking about a very simple part. So if you can be a complete musician, you'll get more work.

The other thing—percussionists playing drumset—could happen just as easily, but it's more difficult to do. A percussionist who hasn't studied drumset is not going to go into a studio and play drumset for anybody. It's just not that easy to do. There's not that much technique involved in playing a little bell part. However, even a simple drumset part could be tough. In the symphony, we have had guest artists come in and use members of the orchestra as their backup group. These artists are used to working with highly skilled jazz players, and they are not always satisfied when symphony musicians fill in. So you're more valuable if you can perform in both areas.

RM: Even if a person didn't want to actually play gigs on set, what about the knowledge of time? I have encountered a certain number of percussionists who have never had the responsibility of keeping time. All they've ever done is follow a conductor.

AC: Drumset players are more in the forefront of leading. They are almost the conductor in many ways, whereas in an orchestra we're not in that position. We are following, like everybody else. But there are parts where percussion should be leading, and you do have to take that initiative. If you have drumset experience, you will probably be better able to do that.

RM: What could drumset players learn from the classical approach?

AC: First of all, they could learn to read music. A lot of them don't read. A lot of them learn by rote and play by ear. Second, they could learn technique. Many of them don't have a highly developed technique. Some young kids are very musical, very talented, have good ears, listen to records, have good licks, but they have no idea how to hold the sticks. Everything is forced. So one thing they could learn from a classical musician is a more solid snare drum technique. I have a lot of jazz majors; they take my class too. Sometimes they play snare drum with a thumb-up grip. I say, "That's not how to play snare drum. You play ride cymbal like that. You should turn over and play snare drum like this, because you're using the muscles better; you're using the wrists better." If you're going to go on and not just be a drumset player, then you should want to have more of a classical technique.

I'll never forget the experience I had in Juilliard. Louie Bellson gave a clinic at Juilliard, and he played this closed roll SO LOUD, with his sticks going SO HIGH—I couldn't even imagine how he could do that. Usually, when we play a closed roll, we open it up a little as we get louder. He didn't have to open it! He played the whole thing closed! I never saw anybody do that. He has an amazing talent. But we open the roll up to play loud, so as not to force it by keeping it closed and trying to play loud by pushing into the drum. Drumset players could certainly learn that.

I've never had any problem teaching technique to drumset players. As a matter of fact, the feedback I get is that it makes them play better, because we're not changing what they're doing; we're just adding to it. If they are doing something really wrong, they're limiting their facility and I can correct that. Most of what I work on with my students is technique, especially in the beginning. We're always discussing technique. Once they get that down, and they're playing properly, then we can go on and talk about music.

RM: A lot of orchestras and schools own various percussion instruments, but what should a percussionist personally own?

AC: A percussionist is, in a sense, a collector of instruments. You can't get away from it. Any aspiring percussionist has to begin a collection of instruments, because you can't wait until you get a symphony job and then use their instruments. What happens during all these years before you get there? You're going to get freelance jobs, and you're going to need instruments. I tell my students that it's important for them to begin collecting their instruments early, because when they buy their tambourine, they're going to have it for life. This is something you're collecting, and it's a good investment. Good instruments are going to appreciate in value. Think of old cymbals! Sometimes, it's a better investment to buy instruments than to put your money in the bank, depending on what you buy. You might spend a lot of money on it now, but in a few years it will be worth a lot more money.

The practical side of it is that you need instruments to be a professional. You can't be called on to play a church job on timpani if you don't have timpani. The church won't have any timpani, so they have to find someone who does, and that's who will get hired. And that goes right down the line. Get your own triangle, tambourine, claves, maraccas... all the little stuff is easy to pick up; there's no real investment there. And your first big investment—if you already have a drumset—is a mallet instrument. Everybody likes to find that nice, used mallet instrument in an old music store for $200, but that's very rare, and you can't wait forever, so you begin to buy new instruments as you have the money. Eventually you buy things like a set of bells—very important for freelance work. Of course, a number of snare drums. A small, concert bass drum is invaluable for freelance work. Vibraphone is used a lot. A set of chimes is a very valuable thing to have because not many people own them, so you can rent them out. It all has to be bought at some point. You

"WE ARE ALL SLAVES TO THIS BUSINESS. IF WE DON'T KEEP UP THE TECHNIQUE, IT WILL SUFFER."

Photo by Greg Toland

can't buy it all at once, but sometimes you can buy things as you need them, and you can always rent them out to other people who need them.

University students take it for granted when the instruments are provided. They balk when they have to buy a pair of timpani sticks. That's a terrible attitude. We're not asking you to buy the timpani; we're asking you to buy the sticks to hit "em with. If you're a trumpet major, you don't come in and borrow a trumpet. Percussion students should have the attitude that it's a positive thing to buy instruments. They're not wasting their money. It's their career. Don't buy a cheap snare drum stand; buy the best. You'll have it for life. The cheap one is going to give you so much trouble that it's not worth it. Buy the best set of drums; buy the best mallet instrument—I believe in that, because you'll have it a lifetime.

RM: You mentioned a number of snare drums. Be specific.

AC: Okay. I think, if we're talking about orchestral playing, it's invaluable to have a gut snare drum with calf heads, I may be one of the last to think that way, but there are a few of us around who still use calf heads with gut snares. A gut snare drum sounds more like a drum than a wire snare drum in a big concert hall. You very rarely can overplay a gut snare drum, but you can overplay a wire drum—when you play loud, you lose the sound of the snares. With gut snares you have much more of a dynamic level where you still hear snare sound and not just the drum sound.

RM: Wood or metal shell?

AC: I use all metal-shell drums because they are brighter. Personally, I like a bright snare drum. I have my heads cranked up really tight. It's easier to play on a tight head than a loose head; the sticks bounce faster and the rolls are easier to play.

RM: Depth?

AC: I wouldn't go beyond a 6" shell for a concert drum. And then it's important to have a four- or five-inch wire snare drum, with plastic heads. In many pieces I have both of my drums there, and in any given piece, I will use whichever drum I feel is appropriate for any given part. If I had a lot of loud playing and one little soft roll, I'd go to the wire drum for that roll. I usually have both drums set up, unless it's a particular piece that I know doesn't need two drums. If I don't know the piece, I have both drums there. A conductor would rarely tell a percussionist to use a wire drum or a gut drum. Most of them don't understand what that means, so it's really your decision at that point. They may say that the drum is too loud, or too soft, but they don't usually talk about quality. I think with those two drums, you can get most of your work done. Then you need a good concert field drum that you can use as a tenor drum or a parade drum, with gut snares. With those three drums you can perform most of the literature.

RM: What about a 3 x 13 piccolo snare drum?

AC: I think a 4" drum is about as small as you need. We have some small drums—they might qualify as piccolo drums—but they're 14" drums and they're about 4" shells. I don't know if you'd call that a piccolo drum, but I don't really think you'd need smaller than that, unless the piece called for three snare drums—high, medium and low. Then a smaller drum would be valuable. But other than that, I don't think there's a need for it in the standard literature.

RM: I've known a lot of percussionists who own their own cymbals, even if their orchestra owns cymbals.

AC: That's right. Cymbals are such a personal thing. When you get a good pair of crash cymbals, then boy, you've got something. A good pair of crash cymbals is a major find, and it's something that every percussionist should be looking for. Of course, a pair of crash cymbals is necessary for most of the literature we play, so if you are going to be in a situation such as a community orchestra, or a pick-up orchestra, they do not supply the equipment. And most all of the classical literature uses crash cymbals, so that is a very standard piece of equipment.

RM: Would you say a pair of 18's would be the basic?

AC: Yes, if you're buying one pair of cymbals, buy yourself a pair of 18's. If you're going to buy a second pair, you have a choice: you could either buy a pair of I6's, or go down to a pair of 15's. Ultimately, you really need 18's, 16's and maybe 15's or 14's. Probably I'd go to 14's, if I were going to buy three pairs.

There's so much to cymbal playing. The major literature requires imagination and the use of different colors for different entrances ... I mean, you can really get into that. The use of cymbals in an orchestra could be a whole interview in itself, because the orchestral parts don't give you enough information at all. Sometimes you don't even know if it's a suspended cymbal or crash cymbals. Knowing the literature will help you make those decisions; studying the part, listening, and using your imagination to see what sounds best. Trying to think, "What does the composer want here?" Many times you'll be playing crash cymbals, and all of a sudden there is a roll. Now what does the composer mean? Suspended cymbal? An effect with the crash cymbals? The part doesn't tell you;

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you've got to make that decision. And so you think about it. You experiment. If it's a real brassy section, the crash cymbal roll works great. If it's obviously supposed to be a suspended cymbal, then somebody else has to play it, like in *Scheherazade.* There are many instances where that comes up.

RM: One problem with cymbals is that once you buy them, you're stuck with that sound. With a drum, you can tune it various ways, use different combinations of heads, different types of snares, different types of mufflers, but with cymbals, there really is nothing you can do to change the sound.

AC: That is a problem. If you can attend something like a PAS convention, where the major cymbal companies have booths, you can get a chance to try out a few cymbals. Other than that, unless you have a supplier in your area who stocks a lot of cymbals, there's not much of a choice.

RM: Someone looking for a suspended cymbal might find a store that has a good choice, but suppose the person is looking for a pair of 18" crash cymbals. Where are you going to find several pairs of 18" crash cymbals to try out? That's not the kind of thing that your average store is going to have in stock.

AC: I'll tell you what I suggest to my students, because there is no place to do that. I tell them to write to Lennie DiMuzio at Zildjian and say, "I need a pair of 18" crash cymbals for orchestral work. I'll buy them through such-and-such dealer. Please send them the best ones you have." Lennie has always picked out a good pair and sent them. I did that when I came to San Francisco. I wrote to Zildjian and told them that I was a new member of the orchestra, I needed a pair of cymbals, and would they please send some to Drumland, and they did. It was a good pair of crash cymbals. So there are ways. I think if you didn't like them, they would probably take them back and exchange them. It's such a personal thing. You're absolutely right. And if you get a good pair, hang onto them!

RM: Let's talk about percussion ensembles. I was always taught that music was made up of three things: melody, harmony and rhythm. Some percussion music doesn't seem to have even one of those. A lot of pieces are just sound effects.

AC: Well, first of all, you've got to separate percussion into two areas: the educational area and the professional area. Now, most of the percussion music is in the educational area. You can count the groups on one hand who have done anything professionally with that kind of music. Take Nexus, who is probably the most successful of these groups. You have very individualistic people here, with very specialized backgrounds, and they don't play a lot of the educational-type music. They play what they do best, and they do it fantastically. They do so many different types of music. They are really specialists in what they do.

Educationally, I look at it quite differently. The percussion ensemble, to me, is a training ground. Do you know the philosophy of training an orchestra? I picked this up from working with conductors through the years. When a new conductor comes into a young orchestra, they don't use Stravinsky or modern music to do that. They use Mozart, because you have so much unison of rhythm. There's very little room for error in Mozart. It's such a strain to play it properly; it takes tremendous technique. So an orchestra that can play Mozart well is a well-trained orchestra, and that's how I look at percussion music. I can't train percussionists as well with avant-garde music as I can with Mozart. Unfortunately, Mozart didn't write for percussion ensemble, but there are a lot of people who have written music that will work just as well. It is music that has those three elements: melody, harmony and rhythm. That is the crucial area of music that you have to begin to work with.

Rhythm, really, is so primarily number one. You have to be able to control the sticks to play the rhythm. It's one thing to play your snare drum rhythm well in your lesson; it's another thing to play a snare drum part in an ensemble and put it together with all the other people. There's another skill involved, and I have to use music that has rhythm to do that.

Melody brings in the whole scope of phrasing. Again, you can play your solo marimba piece and phrase beautifully, but when you're in a group you've got to phrase together. You can't do your own thing; you can't be a soloist. You've got to phrase the way the music says to phrase as a group. So we do that in the ensemble.

Photo by Greg Toland

"MY WHOLE COMPLAINT ABOUT PERCUSSION MUSIC IS THAT IT'S WRITTEN TOO MUCH BY PERCUSSIONISTS, AND NOT ENOUGH BY COMPOSERS."

Harmony has to do with balance. When you're playing a solo, there's no balance with anything. Maybe if you have a piano accompaniment there is, but in an ensemble there are a lot of balances. You have to know what that dynamic means at a given time. Forte isn't always the same. There is accompaniment forte and there's solo forte. So we do this in an ensemble.

RM: The way you just described melody and harmony, you could have that in an all-drum piece.

AC: Of course, and the music I've written was done with that in mind. I agree with you that music should have these three elements. I think without them, it's questionable if we can call it music in the same form. I don't say it's not valid; I say it has merit if you explain what's happening with it. It's really a judgmental thing. It's an opinion, and I don't think we should say it's right or wrong. But ensemble, for me, is great training in music for percussionists. String players love to play string quartets because they become soloists. Well, that's what happens in an ensemble. The kids learn how to be soloists within a group, not just on their own. People can be great soloists, but put them in a section and they don't play together. What good are those beautiful notes? Counting the rests is so important. You've got to have that concentration in order to come in right. So we all work on this, and my ensemble is a real learning class.

RM: What are some of the considerations for writing good percussion ensemble music?

AC: My whole complaint about percussion music is that it's written too much by percussionists, and not enough by composers. Unfortunately, a lot of percussion music is not so much music, but arrangements of rhythms. It doesn't have enough form. Music should have form, to me, to be successful as music. And I put myself in the category too of a percussionist/composer. I'm a percussionist writing percussion music. You get pieces like the Chavez *Toccatta*—now that's written by a composer, and it's wonderful music. He doesn't write for melody instruments, but there's wonderful phrasing. He doesn't just write the rhythm, he writes phrases and dots that we can interpret. Chavez had music within him. So when we do that piece, we can play it musically. Composers have this ability. If you're just writing a rudimental part for this drum coming in here and that drum coming in there, and putting rudiments together, you're leaving out the element of music making. So I think the ultimate goal is to have more composers write for our medium, and it is happening. That's where we get our best music.

RM: What are some of the considerations for drums playing with other drums, so that they don't get in each other's way?

AC: Well, in percussion ensemble playing there are, of course, a lot of multiple drum setups. One thing I don't like is the mixing of double-headed and single-headed tom-toms. A lot of times someone will use two double-headed concert toms and a set of timbales when they need a four-drum setup. Well, the one-headed drum resonates from the edge of the drum; the two-headed drum resonates from the center. So if you play them all, say, from the center, the two-headed drums are going to resonate and the one-headed drums are going to have a dead sound. I think it works much better to use all one-headed drums when you have multiple drum setups, or all two-headed drums. Then you can play in the same area of the drum throughout the setup. That's getting down to some fine points. Other than that, I think it's the basic points of music and ensemble and balance—knowing when your line is solo, when it's accompaniment, who you're playing together with, and if you are accompanying other people, to listen. Make sure you can hear the other person.

RM: One problem I've seen are pieces which have intermingling rhythms that look good on paper, but when played, the instruments are all in the same general pitch area—timpani, bass drum, large tom-toms, congas—and when they all play at the same time, they tend to cover each other up.

AC: That's an orchestration problem. A composer who isn't knowledgeable may write for too many of the same types of drums, and that will occur. I think it's legitimate as a conductor to change the drums to get the line if it's not clear. Even if the composer was specific about the sizes of the concert toms, I think it's legitimate to change the sizes if you need the clarity.

RM: I often feel that it's the performer's fault more than the composer's. If a composer simply says "large tom-tom," the performer has a certain amount of choice about the actual size of the drum and how it is tuned, so it's the performer who has to make sure that the instrument will work in the overall context of the piece. A "large tom-tom" could be a 9x13 or a l6x18, depending on what other instruments are being used.

AC: This is a good point that relates not only to percussion ensembles, but to percussion in general. Talking about orchestral music, you're given a part to play, right? And no other information is given. You look at the part and decide how to interpret it. Let's say the part is for snare drum. It doesn't say "piccolo snare drum" or "5 1/2" snare drum"; it doesn't say "wire snares" or "gut snares." It just says "snare drum." So you look at the part and you figure out what kind of drum would work best in this piece. Now you're becoming the interpreter of this part, and you want to do a good job, so you make all these decisions and try to choose the best drum. With a snare drum, you don't have to worry too much about what you're going to hit it with, but if it were a mallet instrument or a cymbal, you would have to make those choices. Okay, so you make these determinations and go to the rehearsal. The conductor stops and says, "The snare drum is too dry." At that point, you are not the interpreter anymore. The conductor is the interpreter of this music. Now your job—as a performer—is to get that part to sound like the conductor wants it to sound. A lot of people do very well in deciding how they want to play it, but they're not so good in being able to do it the way the conductor wants. That's a very important part of our job.

Now in the ensemble too, the conductor is going to look at the music and try to get the students to do certain things that are not in the part. That comes up all the time in percussion, especially in the classical literature where the composers give very little information about mallets and instruments. Many times, they say to use a certain mallet but it doesn't work, so we change the mallet and use a different one.

RM: Like all of those parts that instruct you to hit a cymbal with a timpani stick.

AC: That's right; a classic example. Or it will tell you to use a soft mallet on the cymbal, but it's supposed to be a real loud crash, and it would sound much better with the butt end of a wood stick. We do that all the time. As long as the conductor doesn't say anything, he liked it. If it's too hard, he'll tell you. Then you can go back and use the other mallet. Joe Sinai and I covered many of these problems in our

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DRUM MACHINES:

Linn-Drum

The big daddy of all the drum machines is the Linn. The *LM-l* made its founding mark; now there is the *LinnDrum* with all its controls on the face panel of the unit.

The *LinnDrum* is currently in its second version. It weighs 22 pounds and can hold 98 rhythm patterns and 49 songs, as programmed by the user. All sounds are digital—real drum sounds recorded into the memory. These sounds are: bass drum, snare, sidestick snare, hi, med, and lo toms, hi and lo congas, Cabasa, cowbell, tambourine, handclaps, ride cymbal, crash cymbal, and open and closed hi-hats. The snare has three dynamic levels; the bass drum, Cabasa, tambourine, ride, and closed hi-hat each have two dynamics (all programmable, of course). Tuning is offered for the snare, toms, and congas. The closed hi-hat has adjustable decay for either a tighter or looser sound. Each sound has its own volume and left-right pan sliders for a stereo image, as well as separate outputs for all. The array of rear outputs allows different EQs, plus direct injection into a mixing deck.

A click track is provided, also with its own volume control. Tempo is adjustable, but not programmable. It will read out digitally in either beats-per-minute or frames-per-beat (often used in film scoring). There are also read-outs for pattern number and step number. Any time signature may be used, since the programmer sets the meter, as well as the length of the pattern.

If the programmer does not play beats in correct tempo while writing the rhythms, the Linn will fix it up with six levels of error-correction from 8th notes to 32nd-note triplets. There is also an option to override the error correct, if so desired.

Since machines do tend to sound like machines sometimes, Linn has six variations of rhythm "feel" adjustment from straight (50-50%) to shuffle (70-30%). This feature will work during programming or playback.

The unit has full editing and pattern copy functions, and will store patterns on cassette with pre-storage verification. Cassette storage certainly has its benefits. Besides being able to create a whole library of patterns, it is quite possible that a recording drummer could program a part at home, dump it onto cassette, and mail it to the producer who would then load it into his own Linn machine to be used on final tracks.

There are five external-source trigger inputs, allowing one to hook up Simmons or Syndrum pads to the unit. The *LinnDrum* also has outputs to sequencers and Synths, plus it will synchronize to tape for studio patch-ins.

The main feature of the Linn is its sound—all sounds are *superb.* The drums are nice and fat, the cymbals and percussion are crystal-clear. Stack the Linn up against any good-sounding drumkit, and you probably won't be able to tell what's what. In fact, the Linn might even be better.

One disadvantage that the Linn does have is its inability to do quick double-stroke rolls. Due to the small playing button sizes, they're difficult to program in. Doing them slowly, and then boosting playback tempo only causes them to sound mechanical and tappy.

Back to the subject of sound, Linn also offers Alternate Sound chips at $40 to $60 each. The library includes nine different snare sounds, three bass drum sounds, four other tom-tom sounds, and many percussion sounds. Linn will also custom-make chips for any sound you provide. If you want to use these options, the machine must be ordered with zero-insertion sockets.

As stated earlier, the sounds are incredible. However, it seems that the memory space allotted to the crash cymbal is too short, since the crash cuts out abruptly during the fade, instead of dying out completely. A decay control could come in handy, along with tuning capability.

I asked Linn about cymbal bell sounds, since none are to be found in the *Linn-Drum* or the Alternate Sounds library. Their response was that cymbal bell sounds (and snare rim shots, for that matter) have to be custom-made at this point.

Roger Linn's company started it all, and they are constantly improving their product in order to stay on top. A few suggestions I have are: make the tempo programmable, include a memory protect switch, and include tuning for all other voices. Perhaps Version III will take these into account. The *LinnDrum* is the ultimate drum machine, and surprisingly, is very easy to program. Retail: $2995.

a comparative look

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by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

Oberheim DX

Gaining ground on the Linn is the Oberheim *DX.* It has 12 digital sounds: bass, snare, open & closed hi-hat, accented hi-hat, hi, mid, and lo toms, crash cymbal, shaker 1 & 2, plus handclaps. The *DX* will store 100 patterns and 50 songs. Each song can contain up to 255 patterns. Recording can be done in either real time or step programming (like the Linn).

The sounds are arranged into six groups. There are separate volumes for the set of six and the metronome. There is also a master volume, and all these are controlled by sliders. There are separate outputs for the six groups and the click. The bass, snare and cymbal have three dynamic levels, each using its own play button.

Tunings range over a half octave, and are controlled from the back of the unit. It is here that the *DX* has a slight disadvantage. The six groups can be tuned separately, but sounds within a given group cannot. Specifically, tom-toms are all tuned together, as are shaker and handclaps. If you want a *Roto-tom* sound plus a low, deep floor tom at the same time, then you're stuck.

Various jacks on the back include footswitch inputs for starting and changing patterns, a trigger input, and clock input and output. There are also jacks for mono, and left/right stereo mix outputs. The stereo is pre-panned with the toms in the center, snare at left, and bass drum at right. From my own studio experiences, this stereo mix setup seems backwards. It would be better to have the snare and kick near center, and the toms panned left-to-right (or right-to-left) for a better perspective.

The *DX* will interface with a cassette machine for loading and dumping of patterns and songs. There is an "enable" switch for this function, as well as a memory protection switch. The unit will store patterns internally for five years, thanks to battery backup.

Like the Linn, the *DX* has error correction (which Oberheim calls "quantize"). This mode is selectable in eight values from quarter note to 1/48 note (dotted 1/32), and also has a defeat option if you want the rhythms recorded exactly as played. The unit also has straight to shuffle "feels" in five percentages. The *DX* has full edit and copy capabilities. Time signature is variable, as is pattern length. Tempo is adjustable from 25 to 250 B.P.M., and can read out digitally on the small window screen. Here, the *DX* beats out the Linn in the respect that the tempo is *programmable* with each sequence or song.

The Oberheim sounds are very good—in fact, they are second only to the *LinnDrum.* The cymbal can range from a tiny splash to a 20" heavy crash. The snare is a little drier than Linn's, and the toms are flatter. I personally feel that the *DX* handclaps are better than Linn's. They all sound very realistic, and why not?—they *are* real sounds recorded into memory.

Of course, the *DX* leaves out some voices, like ride cymbal, tambourine, sidestick snare, etc., but its big brother, the 24-voice *DMX,* can accommodate most of those.

The *DX* is laid out very logically and neatly, making it easy to program. For its retail price of $1395, it is a serious contender in the Battle of The Drum Machines.

E-MU

Drumulotor

The E-Mu is the only programmable unit with digital sounds that is available for under $1000. The *Drumulator* has 12 sounds: snare, bass, hi, mid and lo toms, ride, open & closed hi-hat, clave, cowbell, claps, and sidestick. Up to 36 individual patterns ("segments") can be retained, each up to 99 measures long. Segments may be combined to create up to eight songs.

The unit has four buttons into which the sounds of your choice are transferred from six dual-voice "call" buttons. At any one time, only four sounds can be recorded, but the buttons can be re-assigned after your first round to suit other sounds you may want to use.

All programming is done in real time. The E-MU is capable of adjustable "feel"—they call it "swing factor." Like other units with this feature, the swing factor enables beats to be transformed to different levels or intensities of shuffle. It also has auto-correct in six levels (1/8 note to 1/32 triplet) plus override.

Tempo is adjustable from 40-240 B.P.M. via a slider, and the metronome can be programmed for different click intervals. The best feature of the *Drumulator* is its ability to program tempo, mix, and dynamics. This is extremely useful if you have a song that slows down in the middle, gets softer or louder, or fades in and out. Different segments cannot have different mixes, however. The "master" mix affects all segments.

The E-MU has cassette transfer and editing capabilities. It has eight individual outputs plus one mix output. Other outputs are for drum pad trigger, and trigger

pulse rate. Two footswitch jacks may be connected—one for start/stop, the other to allow the user to exit from repeating loops and continue on. (Loops might be good when you're programming for a solo of unknown length.) Readout screens on the unit provide pertinent programming and playback information.

The sounds in the *Drumulator* are very good—the snare is tight, and the kick is full with a bit of impact sound. The cymbals are nice, and the percussion is crystal-clear. (Love that cowbell!) The toms are a little too flat for my tastes, but are probably ideal to someone else's ear.

There is no tuning capability, nor a crash cymbal, but E-MU has done a fine job in creating a functional machine. A great deal at $995.

MXR 105

The MXR *185* has 12 digital sounds, all with separate levels and outputs. MXR's sounds include: snare, bass drum, hi, mid and lo toms, rim shot, open and closed hi-hat, cowbell, woodblock, crash cymbal and handclaps, plus a click track.

The unit has a 2,000 beat memory and is capable of storing 100 patterns and 100 songs. Pitch is adjusted all at once, via a slider. It would certainly be better to have individual tuning, but this would, of course, jack the price up. Each voice has its own volume slider, but there is no master volume control.

The 185 has seven error-correct levels from 1/8 note to 1/32 note triplet and it has four levels of "human feel" from straight-on-the-beat to laying-back-off-the-beat. Tempo is adjustable by a slider in conjunction with an audible click. The tempo marking will read out digitally from 40 to 250 B.P.M. One point that must be mentioned is that during playback, the click track will continue to sound unless you bring its volume slider down. The *185* also has readouts of step number and song/pattern number.

There is a pre-panned stereo mix out, plus jacks for cassette interface. The *185* has two 15-pin connectors on the back for external voice expansion, which I assume indicates their intention to develop more sounds.

Pattern length can be varied. When this function is used, the readout indicates available memory for additional songs and patterns. The *185* has full editing and pattern copy functions, plus tape verification. It has a single trigger input and is also able to sync to tape and accept external tempo generator signals or sequencer-sync signals.

The MXR sounds are very good, but I do have a few criticisms. The toms are much too flat and lack the depth and resonance needed for certain uses. The rim shot is virtually indistinguishable from the regular snare—I think a sidestick sound would be more useful. Also, the open hi-hat has a slight echo in back of it, which can be very distracting. The rest of the sounds are very pleasing.

The one-control overall tuning is a drawback. If you want a high-pitched crash cymbal, then you have to go along with high-pitched snare, toms, etc.

MXR's *Model 185* is laid out very well, and is a good alternative to the higher-priced machines. Retail $1250.

The *KPR-77* features synthesized sounds, and is programmable in either real or step time. The sounds in the basic bank are: bass drum, snare, open & closed hi-hats, high tom, low tom, cymbal, and handclaps. Each sound has two touch keys—this feature makes for easy rolls. The unit also has a separate key to create tom-tom flams, as well as accent keys for dynamics. A seven-channel mixer controls volume for the sounds separately, as well as for the metronome click. The sounds are internally panned in a pre-set stereo image. Outputs are mono or stereo, and the unit has an overall volume master. A convenient "training mode" switch allows practicing of patterns without memory entry. (Most of the other machines have this, but without the switch.) There is a lighted screen in the upper left corner of the unit which gives a continuous LCD display of operating mode and other pertinent information during both programming and playback.

The *KPR-77* can hold three groups of 16 patterns (48 patterns total). Each pattern contains up to 32 steps (two 4/4 measures of 16th notes). Up to 16 patterns can be combined.

There are six chain banks which can each hold 256 measures of 4/4. Of course, these may also be combined. The unit has options for Da Capo and Del Segno repeats. Different time signatures can also be programmed in.

Note value resolution can be set from 1/16 note to 1/32 triplet. Pattern length can

JTGSR-88

The *SR-88* is an analog machine using four synthesized sounds: bass drum, snare, hi-hat and cymbal. The sounds cannot be tuned, and there are no independent volumes for the voices—only a single master volume.

Not tested in this article, but worth mentioning for a complete overview:

Roland *TR-808*—11 voice analog; 32 patterns $1095

Roland *TR-606*—7 voice analog; 32 patterns $395

Oberheim *DMX*—16 voice digital; 100 patterns $2895

The Mattel Synsonics *and MXR's* The Kit *were reviewed in the April '83 issue of MD.*

Korg KPR-77

also be varied, but has limitations. Here, length is the number of quarter notes to be programmed. The resolution number (4, 6, 8 or 12) multiplied by the length number (1 to 8) cannot exceed 32. The maximum pattern length is two bars of 4/4 time with a 16th note being the smallest value programmed. If you have to program faster notes, then the pattern length correspondingly decreases.

The *KPR-77* has only one output—for the snare and handclaps together. EQ and effects can be added to these sounds, but not to anything else. There are two trigger outputs for the hi and lo toms, and, the machine will link to another *KPR-77* or other rhythm machine for synchronized play. A cassette interface feature is including, allowing storage and retrieval of patterns.

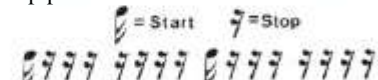
The sounds on the *KPR-77* are equivalent to what you'd find on a rhythm box, since they are synthesized, and not real sounds. The snare and bass are quite passable, while the hi-hats are very metallic, the toms are thumpy, and the handclaps are crunchy. This certainly makes for no comparison whatsoever to the Linn, Oberheim, etc.

The unit is a bit confusing at first, especially when trying to interpret the read-out screen. However, for what it does and what it sounds like, the price is realistic. Perhaps Korg will consider simplification of their controls, and using digital sounds in a future model. Retail $695.

The unit has pre-set lengths: six 16-step positions and two 12-step positions. The 16-step positions are each one full bar of 4/4 time; the 12-step ones are each one full bar of 4/4 time. Two separate variations (A and B) can be programmed for each of the eight positions, giving a total of 16 one-bar patterns. Combining A and B will give two-bar patterns on playback. Switching to "Fill-In" gives a fill every four, eight, or sixteen bars.

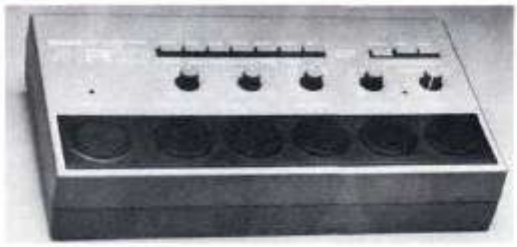
Tempo is adjustable for playback and an LED shows the downbeat. A single tone control adjusts all sound simultaneously. There is a single output jack plus a remote footswitch jack.

When programming the unit, there is no audible metronome track. Since the machine "thinks" 16th notes, there is no need to worry about tempo—it places them where they belong. All programming is done in 16th notes and there are only two buttons to accomplish this—start and stop. These buttons are used for both writing and playback. The Start button marks the 16th-note beat, while the Stop serves as a 16th rest. So, to write a pattern, you must constantly think in 16th notes. For example, writing a bass drum on counts "1" and "3" requires two Start pushes and *14* Stop pushes.



what makes this an even better mental feat is that previously written voices do not play back during the write mode—at least they didn't on the machine I tested. Since the voices are contained in one, four-stop switch, only one voice may be written at a time.

The bass drum sound on the *SR-88* is the only liveable one. The snare is too poppy, the hi-hat is too tight, and in fact, sounds like a shaker. The cymbal sound is almost total distortion. The *SR-88* is very difficult to program, and its sound is no better than one of the first-generation rhythm boxes. Retail: $179.95.



Yamaha MR 10

The *MR-10* is part of Yamaha's *Producer Series.* It is basically a rhythm box, but also has five, disc-shaped pads for manual playing. The *MR-10* has 12 preprogrammed rhythms which can be changed from one to the other by pushing a button. Each rhythm has three variations, also via pushbutton: normal, which gives a repeating pattern; 4-Bar, for a fill every four bars; and 8-Bar, for a fill every eight bars. The disc pads are a bit larger than a quarter and are assigned for bass drum, snare, high tom, low tom, and cymbal. These pads allow manual playing either alone or in conjunction with a preset rhythm.

Tempo of the pre-set rhythms can be adjusted, and there is also a Start/Stop disc pad with a flashing LED. Another LED is located at the power/overall-volume control.

A tune control changes the pitch of all sounds together. Yamaha has included volume controls for the bass drum and cymbal, but surprisingly, none for the snare and toms. The tom-toms could really use their own control, since they are lower in volume than the others when played manually.

The *MR-10* is not capable of programming, and all sounds are synthetically produced. The snare and bass drum are good, but the others do need improvement—especially the cymbal which sounds like a rash of white noise. The hi and lo toms are closer to the sound of congas than to tom-toms.

The unit runs on six AA batteries, or on an AC adaptor. There is a single output jack accepting a 1/4" phone plug. Available optionally is the *KP-10* kick pedal, which is a momentary pedal switch for foot playing of the bass drum.

Yamaha's *MR-10* is the lowest priced drum unit around, retailing at only $100. It would be a bit more useful if you could mix out certain sounds in the pre-set patterns, and then play your own patterns on top. (For example: only keeping the hi-hat pulse in a given pre-set, and then playing snare and bass drum on the key pads, making a "custom" rhythm pattern.)

While not directed towards the "serious" drum machinist, the *MR-10* is a nice little unit to have around for developing polyrhythms, working out ideas, or just having fun.

J.R. Mitchell

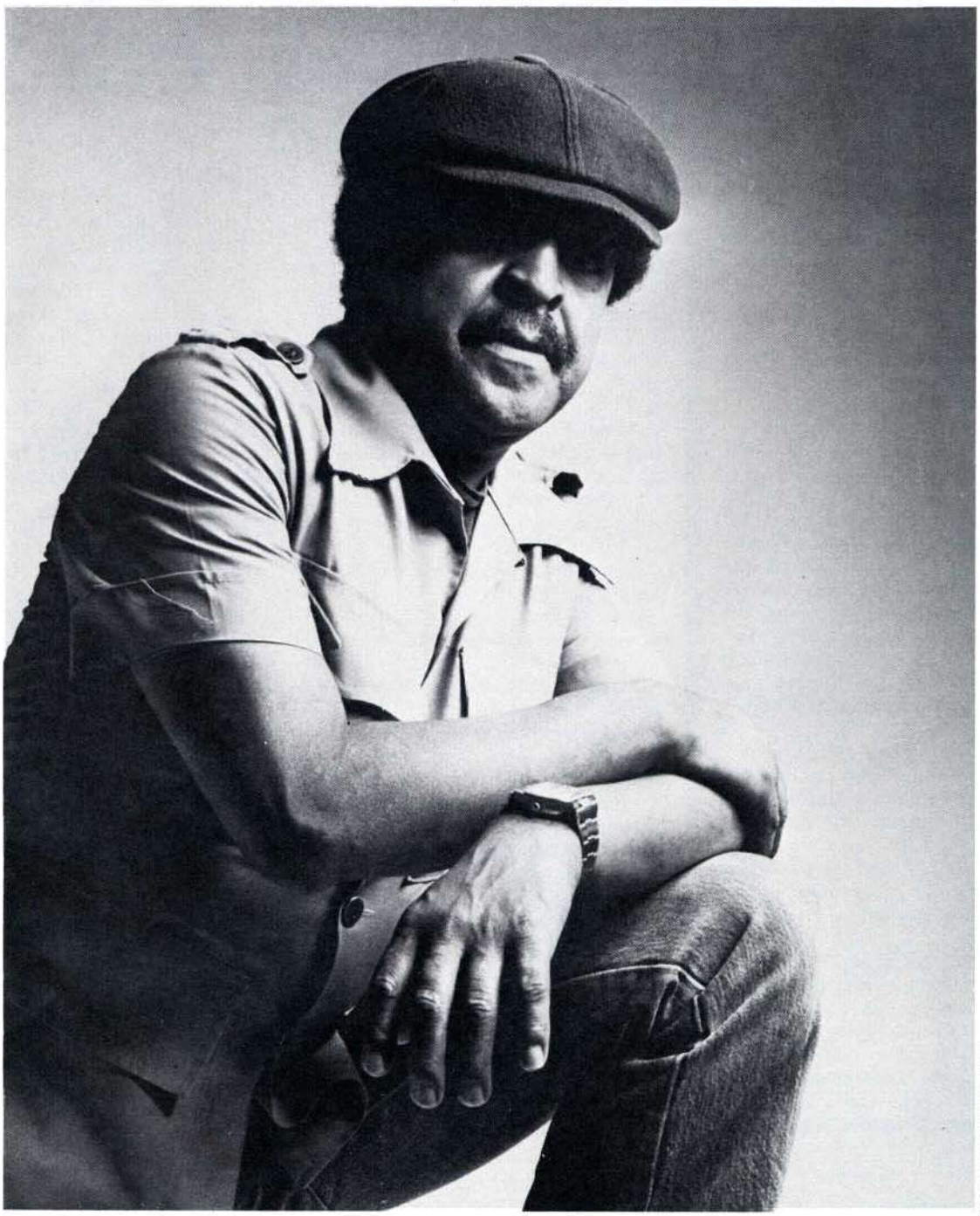


Photo by Charles Stewart

CREATIVE SURVIVAL

by Scott K. Fish

J.R. Mitchell is a multi-faceted human being. On the surface, he might seem to be "just"a drummer. But in reality, J.R. is a composer, an educator, a record company owner/producer and—in his own way—a philosopher. He holds a B.A. in Applied Instruments (percussion) from Combs College ofMusic, and a Master's degree in Composition from the New England Conservatory. His record label is Doria Records in New York City, and he's released several live albums of his own J.R. Mitchell Universal Ensemble, as well as albums of other artists.

His versatility as a musician covers mainstream jazz to avant-garde (referred to as "creative music" by J.R.), and he's performed or recorded with such jazz giants as Sonny Stitt, Betty Carter, Nina Simone, Ernie Wilkins, Ray Copeland, Byard Lancaster, Jaki Byard, Jackie McLean, Charlie Rouse and Tommy Flanagan.

SF: I see that you have a copy of Valeric Wilmer's book, *As Serious As Your Life.* Valerie mentions you in that book. One thing that's always seemed very obvious—and it comes through in that book—was in relation to musicians who have chosen to play avant-garde music. There's a lot of bitterness about not being able to make a living at it. When you decide to go into a particular field—*any* field—you can see the people in that field who have come before you and get a pretty good idea of what's in store for you If you walk the same road. It begs the question, "Well, what did you expect?"

JRM: Well, you're *not* going to make a living from it, that's for sure. How many really creative artists are able to make a living from playing creative music? I have a film of Tchaikovsky. The only reason this cat was able to do what he did was because some woman heard his playing and liked him. She had some money and she became his sponsor. Before he had that sponsor he was going through the same things as a jazz musician. If Bach, Beethoven and Mozart hadn't had the church to be their sponsor, they would've been out there by themselves.

Unfortunately, black music is oppressed the same way that the people are oppressed. I admire Archie Shepp very much. If you check out some of Archie's earlier Impulse recordings, he was always rebelling. But he also told me that when he was recording for Impulse, they only let him record one album a year. And he was on welfare at that time, making less than six thousand dollars a year.

Because some artists have X amount of recordings out, most people figure they're doing very well. They ain't doing that well, man! The records are out there and it *looks* good. I had a couple of artists tell me, "Man, if they'd give me the money for all these records, they could have them." It's nice to have a product out on the market if it's bringing you some income. But, if it's not, how are you benefitting from it? You're not. The exposure is fine, but the club owner and the concert promoter don't see that kind of exposure. These cats say, "Well, where's your record? Send me a couple of tapes." They want half your life before they will give you a $50-a-night gig. I've sent out a lot of material. When I went to my accountant about my income taxes, he said I'd spent more money than I made.

SF: Can you tell me about the function of the drumset in what you call "creative music"?

JRM: Well, in creative music, one very rarely uses the bass drum. In a big band you have to because it helps push it. But the bass drum is actually only supposed to be used for accents. Other than that, in terms of keeping the time, the sock cymbal does it. It's either on "2" and "4," or "1" and "3."

SF: Unless you're playing like Elvin Jones.

JRM: Well, Elvin's thing is poly. And here again, Elvin's playing it, but I bet you if you notated it and said, "Elvin, this is what you just played," he wouldn't be able to play it. It's fine to analyze, but some artists will get into the analyzation of it so much that they forget that one of the things the music has to do all the time is swing.

I was playing with Jaki Byard's big band, reading the charts right down. He told me, "Man, you're not *swinging.* You're reading the music but you're not pushing the band."

When I was up at the conservatory, I played in George Russell's ensemble. The music was real interesting and very challenging, but in all the time I played in it, the band never swung. It wasn't just me. The music was very creative and very rhythmic, but it never swung. It wasn't like you could really pop your fingers to it, or get up and dance. That wasn't going on. And it happens when musicians get so technical.

SF: What drummers had the most influence on you?

JRM: When I was coming up, the two major influences were Blakey and Max. They still are. Max is more of a technician and he's so unique in his playing, and Art's got that whole drive. It's just two different perspectives, but they're saying so much. Drummers who are coming up in music now and who weren't influenced in some way by one of these gentlemen are lacking something in their drumming. These guys are two of the strongest forces out there in the music business *now.* I'm only referring to creative music.

I think the best band Blakey had was the band with Lee Morgan in it. Lee must've been a hell of an influence on Art. I played with Lee at some sessions. Here again, with Lee Morgan and Spanky DeBrest, when they put you out there so fast when you're so young, man, so many things can happen that you're not able to adjust to. Dope messed Lee up and drinking messed Spanky up. Attitude is the whole thing, man. It's like how you really carry yourself in whatever environment. If you're going to play at the White House, you know what you've got to do. If you're going to play up in Harlem at Small's, then you have to adjust to *that* environment. Artists have that little thing in them where if they don't like something, they're going to let people know about it through their attitude changes, instead of thinking, "Hey, this is where I'm at, so let me adjust to the environment that I'm in."

Jaki Byard hipped me to a lot. He's very flexible and he's got the personality, the attitude and the things that go along with it. So he can get along with anyone. Sometimes I used to think he was a little bit too open, because I felt that he wasn't laying down the law with musicians in the band. Sometimes you do have to do that because some people take kindness for weakness and they abuse it. When that happens, you can hear it in the music, it doesn't come across the way that it would if that respect was there.

I just did a thing at Lincoln Center, and a lot of musicians got on me because I didn't call them. I'm very selective in the different artists I use. I used certain musicians who were students at Amherst because they needed to come to New York. I used musicians from Philadelphia because they're excellent musicians, but they have to come out of Philadelphia every now and then. Regardless of whether people want to live in New York or not, New York is the mecca of export/import for the arts. You have to come here and spend a little time if you want to get over in the arts in some way, whether it be in music, painting, or whatever! It's the environment that you're in that really makes you become a stronger musician. New York is survival.

I know musicians now who just about make it from working a gig that might only be paying $100, and they might not work for another week and a half or two weeks. But for some reason, man, they don't get out of the music. It's like it's a drug that keeps pulling them back into it. In New York, now, if you make $50 or $75, you're doing good. If you're playing five nights that's fine. But most clubs you're doing a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. At Sweet Basil's you do four nights. So you might come out of there with $250 per man. They can't afford any more than that because of their overhead. But a lot of musicians will play these clubs because they still have the opportunity to play their music. They're jazz rooms.

SF: That goes back to what we were saying, that if someone wants to make it in this business, they'll pay the price.

JRM: You've got to put the effort into it for it to start rolling. A lot of kids want you to give them this stuff; they don't want to do the work, man. But then nothing will happen. That's what I found with some musicians. If you let them lay back and not really produce what they have to, then they

won't. They want you to do the work for them. Today, the opportunity is there to go to school. It's not forced, but if students want to get something out of school, then they will.

Today, it's very hard to get three or four musicians together to really function as a unit. But all of those musicians who came out of Kansas City during the Swing Period—we're talking about 20 or 25 musicians—all these cats functioned as one. That's why if one person did one thing, then everybody else knew exactly what that person was doing. It became a unit. Today, we have a lot of leaders, a lot of stars, and a lot of very good musicians, but we don't have any groups that play as a unit. Well, Buddy Rich's band is a unit.

SF: That's one of the reasons why so many jazz musicians aren't doing well economically.

JRM: That's it. That's one thing I learned about rock bands. Even though these cats aren't playing a lot of music, they'll play together for six months or whatever, and when they come back, their sound is together. I don't know what it is with jazz artists, but we have a hard time doing things collectively. Cats can't say that they don't have enough time, because they do. That's an excuse.

Today, the thing is money. We were speaking before about whether or not an artist should make the change over from creative music to commercial music. It's very hard not to.

SF: Well, why not? Let's use B.B. King as an example. All of a sudden he can make some money. But, he's been on the chitlin' circuit forever.

JRM: That's the whole thing, man. I don't knock him. I just don't know if I would be comfortable doing it all the time. But then again, we don't know what George Benson or B.B. King are doing, or someone like Stanley Turrentine, who's doing a very commercial thing. But I know that Stanley goes up to the Bronx and Brooklyn, and plays sessions. There are times, I'm sure, when these artists who are doing the very commercial thing leave that, and go back and just do some playing. I think they have to have a release.

But, you have to realize that after an artist has put so much time into playing, if an opportunity comes along, I don't think you should shove it. Other musicians put down musicians who make that transition. I can't put them down because I can see how much you go through just to get to certain levels. To be honest, there's only enough room at the top for a certain amount of artists. Everyone isn't going to make it! Some cats have to realize that they're not going to make it all the way up to that top level. If you can accept it and digest it, then you know what you have to do to make it on the level that you're at.

SF: Everybody has different gifts. We have to realize our strengths.

JRM: And our weaknesses. You can overcome your weaknesses, but only to a certain degree, and you're still going to be at the level you're at regardless of what you do.

We often get sidetracked. And in the process of getting sidetracked, we lose respect for the musicians who have been out there a long time, like Max Roach, Jo Jones, Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette. They've been out there for a long time. Some younger musicians think that there are some shortcuts. There aren't any shortcuts.

I told some of my students in Amherst that I used to practice single strokes nine hours a day sitting in the basement. I practiced them open and closed from 9:00 in the morning until noon. I'd stop for lunch, and then go back and practice from about 1:00 until 7:00. I was building some muscles that I ordinarily wouldn't use. Some of my students would say, "Man, you used to sit around for nine hours just practicing single strokes?" It'd be the same thing as somebody sitting down at the piano and practicing scales. And we hear *that* all the time! The point is that the pianists are doing it to get their fingers in shape. Drummers do it to get their fulcrum in shape. It's the same exercise. You're just doing it with a different instrument. Drummers today want to learn a couple of beats, and then they figure that's it.

Musicians are always learning. I try to get to a drum teacher every now and then —just to keep my eyes together and my mind together because the music is changing. Nothing changes that much rhythmically. It's usually going to be in 2/4, 4/4, 3/4 or 6/8. Rhythmically it falls into one of those categories. The thing is how to interpret the different notations that are used today.

SF: Drumset is probably the only instrument where there isn't, and has never been, one specific set of notations.

JRM: There isn't. That's why a drummer has to be a very good interpreter. Studio drummers have to adapt to whatever is written out for the drummer. A lot of times, different composers write different things for the drums but they mean the same thing. The drums have always been considered an instrument for sound effects. In New Orleans or early traditional jazz, the drums acted as a timekeeper for marches. Drums definitely weren't considered a creative instrument.

SF: Were you teaching drums on the college level?

JRM: Yeah. I don't teach drums that much now and I should. One thing that's good about teaching is, if you're getting students who are beginners, it always takes you back to the beginning. You can ask some drummers now to play a ratamacue and they will have forgotten it. They've forgotten what the 26 rudiments are. So teaching beginners refreshes your memory, which is good. But also, in teaching, one has to have a lot of patience, and a lot of musicians don't have patience. They have the energy, and the only way for them to release it is to play. By playing they're able to satisfy that need that's there. But the ability to be in front of a class and have the patience to teach is also an art.

I've had some musicians come up as guest lecturers at the University of Massachusetts and Northeastern. A lot of them are excellent musicians but very bad teachers. There are some exceptions, like Jaki Byard. This guy's a genius of a musician, and he's also a very superb teacher. He has the rapport with students that I haven't seen with other teachers.

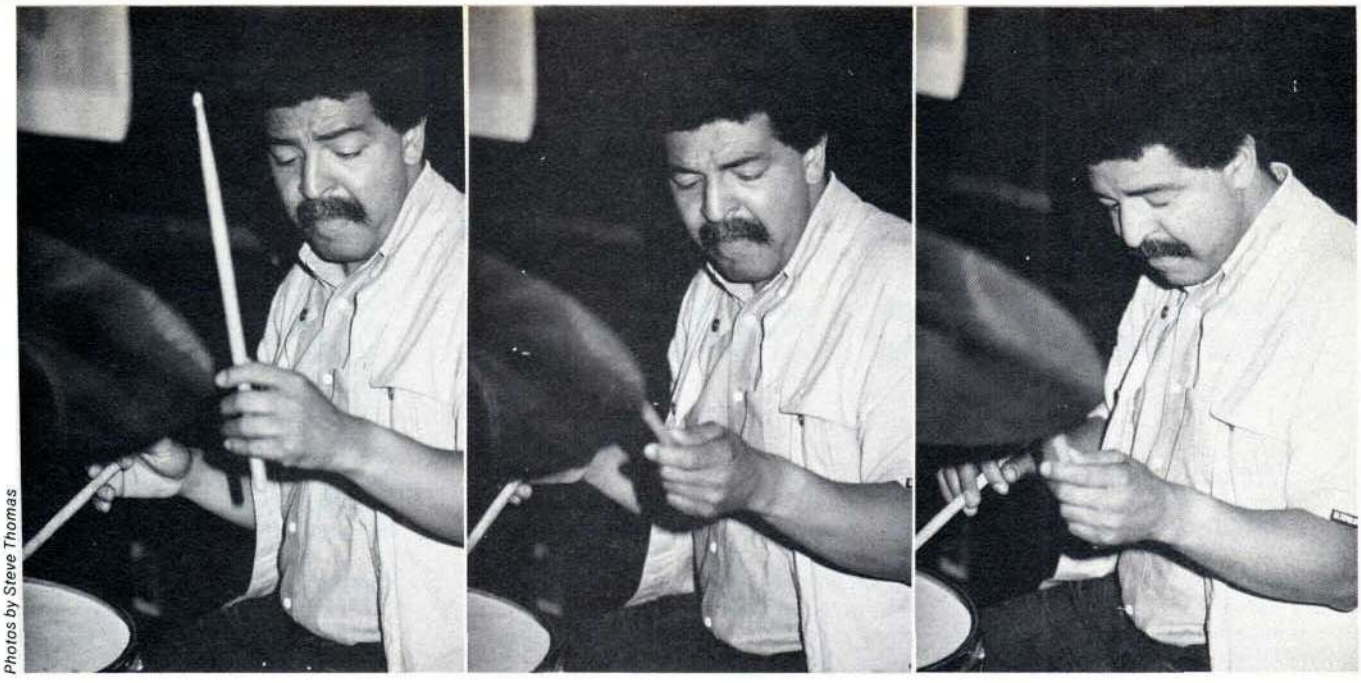
Archie Shepp is a good teacher also, but he'll go way above his students' heads in what he's talking about. Archie's thing in college was journalism; he's heavily into literature.

So teaching is only for a few select jazz artists. One has to have a lot of time and patience in order to stand in front of college students who've reached the point of really making a decision in their lives in terms of what they want to do.

It still has to start at home with the parents. I used to go into the black communities in Roxbury and Bromley Heath. The

Photo by Charles Stewart

"TODAY, WE HAVE A LOT OF LEADERS, A LOT OF STARS, AND A LOT OF VERY GOOD MUSICIANS, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY GROUPS THAT PLAY AS A UNIT."



Photos by Steve Thomas

parents never hit the kids, even if they did something wrong. So to the kids, it was still alright because there wasn't any punishment. Some parents took it to the extreme, but the discipline wasn't there. By the time the kids got to elementary school, the discipline thing was gone. The teachers in elementary school were spending more time disciplining the kids than they were teaching. The other thing is that they don't read, and they don't *retain* what they do read. Who's going to be the next generation? How are they going to survive? And going back into the music, the more complex the music is, the less people really want to listen to it. If it's simple and it doesn't involve any thinking, the kids will go for it.

SF: Did you find any challenges in being a left-handed drummer?

JRM: Yeah. I really didn't want to play left-handed, because I was concerned about sitting in. I told my teacher, "I won't be able to go and play. I'll have to be changing people's drums around." He said, "Well, if you play well enough, you won't have to sit in with other people." It made a lot of sense.

My teacher told me that whatever hand you use the most should be the hand that you use on your ride cymbal. The muscles have been used more in that hand and it's stronger. I can play right-handed, but the feeling is so much different. I'm ambidextrous.

I found that most cats don't mind you changing the snare and the sock cymbal. If I was going to sit in and saw that a drummer had the drumset tied down, I wouldn't even ask to sit in. A lot of times I really don't want to sit in. I think there's a period of time in musicians' lives where they do a lot of sitting in. I've done that. Now, if I'm going to play, it's serious business. I don't have to play to let other musicians or the audience know that I'm a drummer. You're not proving anything to yourself and you shouldn't have to prove it to the other musicians. I'm a good drummer, but I'm no Max Roach, Tony Williams, or Art Blakey. I have my own style, and one will always hear the *influence* of Max and Art in my playing. But it's not like I'm out there to outdo other drummers, because I don't think you really can. There's something unique about all the drummers. Roy Haynes doesn't get the exposure that he should, and he's such a versatile drummer. Anyone who can go from backing a vocalist like Sarah Vaughan to filling in for Elvin with John Coltrane has got to be very versatile. I haven't seen his kind of versatility in too many other drummers.

I don't really have that much association with rock. But, there's a lot I should know about the history of rock, not only as a teacher, but as a player. You're limited if you're not that well-rounded. If a person says, "I just play jazz," that's not very well-rounded. When someone asks me what I play, I say, "I play music."

I'm not heavily into reggae music, but it might be fun doing it, so I'll check it out. A cat in Boston wrote an article that said I was an avant-garde player. Now, when someone says you're an avant-garde player, that means you don't play nothing else. People will begin to label you. They have to have it in certain categories so that they know how lo relate to it. Someone will say, "What kind of music do you play? Bebop? Mainstream? Third Stream? Avant-garde? Fusion?" They go through the whole cycle. The purpose of it is to categorize it so that the people within the industry will know what type of music it is. When someone asks me what type of music I play, I say, "Contemporary." That covers a broad spectrum. You can also be pigeonholed if you say you play black music. Well, that's fine, but that can be from Mississippi John Hurt, to John Coltrane, to Leontyne Price, to Stevie Wonder. That's broad! Which one of those areas are you playing music in? But so often the title ot the music is misleading to people. People say "jazz" or "rock." What is that? I have some idea of what it means, but it can be very misleading.

SF: You've performed with straight-ahead players, singers, and even progressive musicians. Could you explain your concept for drumming in these situations?

JRM: With the mainstream musicians, I begin to note their characteristics even before I play with them. One of the ways I do that is through listening to recordings. That way, you become familiar with the personality and attitude of the artists, so that when you get with them, you're pretty familiar with their background. Doing the straight-ahead things you become even more familiar with what you can do with avant-garde music. I don't put them apart, but there's definitely a difference. You have to be flexible enough today so that you're able to do both. I haven't gotten into it, but you should be able to play the rock, the R&B and the disco things. I've always played avant-garde music. I feel very comfortable playing it.

SF: Are drums in an avant-garde situation more of an equal voice than in other situations?

JRM: A lot more. You're not just a timekeeper. You're soloing along with the soloist. One of the things that I enjoy about the area of avant-garde music, or more contemporary music, is that you can explore a lot more, but the drummer has to be very conscious of what the other musicians are doing. You really have to listen. You have to be very conscious of dynamics and mood changes between two or three other instruments. You're able to solo, but your main function is as a supportive instrument. I relate that to traditional African music. Regardless of how much the drums might solo, they become the instrument that primarily keeps that rhythm and time going behind other drummers, dancers,

continued on page 110

by Neil Peart

The Art Of Soloing

Photo by Jaeger Kotas

I may as well admit the obvious: I am, *indeed, a* practitioner and partisan of that much maligned and oft-persecuted musical form, that thudding, plodding, torment of tedium, that dazzling display of passion and virtuosity—the drum solo. Much contempt has been rained down upon that time-honored institution by bitter critics and by many drummers. Why? I'm not sure I know, but I've been giving it a bit of thought.

The concept of a drum solo is like any other form of self-expression in one respect. It can be very good, and it can be very bad. One can dismiss the self-righteous and oh-so-tired accusations of "self-indulgence" and "ego-tripping" in the face of so much obvious appreciation from audiences for even a simple or mediocre drum assault. It certainly is *not only* the player who receives pleasure from this "ego trip."

Let's face it. Most people *do* like to hear drum solos. There is a definite primal fascination which the rhythmic thrashing of drum-like objects has on those who haven't yet glossed over their essential nature with too much self-conscious hipness.

It is unfortunate that the true obligatory drumsolohasbecomeakindofderigueur sideshow in the artillery of most every rock band. An uninspired and uninteresting solo can certainly be very dull. *Anything* that can be done well can easily be cheapened and bastardized, but it has always seemed to me that a concise, well-paced solo *always* elicits positive audience response. Can this really be self-indulgent? Perhaps just a little, little bit!

Not all drummers *should* take solos. I've seen and heard drummers who had excellent timekeeping, and a flair for spicing up a song with adventurous fills and inventive rhythms, but when it came to the solo spot, it was just a meandering and featureless digression. The opposite is also true. I know a musician who for many years was better at performing solos than at playing songs. This is not very good either.

The real point of it all is that some drummers *do* like performing solos. Who knows? Maybe the others are telling the truth when they claim they *don't* like to. Some drummers definitely do justice to the tradition, and many listeners enjoy them on many levels of understanding and instinct. And your fellow band members usually don't object to a short breather at your expense.

And now, a few words about my own approach. I like to think that my solo is constructed like a song or a story, in that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Over the years, I have developed a changing arrangement of rhythmic and dynamic steps, much as a writer must do. Thus the bridges and transitional sections are organized and fixed, while the individual sections themselves are loosely structured with some repeating passages. However, basically the parts are off the top of my head. There is always improvisation, and always room to stretch out when I feel particularly strong or rambunctious.

The drum solo certainly serves me well as a field of research and development in which I can explore and refine new areas of approach. I like to know how a thing works before I venture it in a song with possible disastrous consequences. Many ideas find their way out of my solo and into new songs that we might be working on. Some ideas find their way out of my solo and into the garbage.

There is also a kind of autobiographical scrapbook that I keep in my solo. Certain patterns which I spent a long time learning, or those few that I consider relatively original, give me the most satisfaction. There are some things that have been in my solo for ten years. Of course, there are things that have only been there for ten days, and I'm sure there have been many accidental improvisations that have only occurred once.

I remember my drum teacher telling me that the two most difficult things I would have to learn would be independence, and that flashy exercise in coordination known as the "double-hand crossover." Of course I'm still working on the limitless universe of the former, but how well I remember that hot summer day in my parents' garage when I finally learned the *trick* of the latter. In retrospect, it really couldn't have been all *that* difficult, but what a shot of confidence and pride it gave me. Those few seconds of nostalgia will probably remain in my solo forever.

In comparing my two recorded solos from *All The World's A Stage (1916)* and *Exit: Stage Left* (1981), it is interesting for me to trace those ideas that have been maintained, those that have developed further, and those which have been replaced by new ventures. With some lack of humility, I sincerely hope that my drum solo at least represents five years of working towards improvement.

Even the present version of my solo differs quite significantly from the latest recorded one, although the arrangement remains substantially the same.

Enough of what I do. Here's what I think: To me a solo on any instrument should combine emotion and technique to varying degrees. It should possess smooth continuity and exciting dynamics, lead to a definite climax, and incorporate a variety of colors and textures. I think a touch of subtle humor is good. I am fond of my little collection of semi-melodic cowbells, with their various, tuneless "clunks" and "clanks." They have an innate kind of goofiness which lends a nice break to an intense percussive onslaught. With a little care and sensitivity, drums can be a very emotive and expressive solo instrument. So, why should the whims of fashion relegate them to the backup role from which so many great drummers fought so hard to extricate them?

Brought down to basic principles, if you enjoy soloing, if your fellow band members agree, and if the audience responds to it, *who* can possibly have cause to criticize the truth and beauty of that relationship? Go wild!

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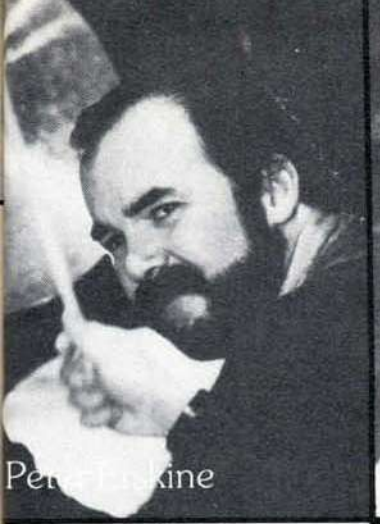

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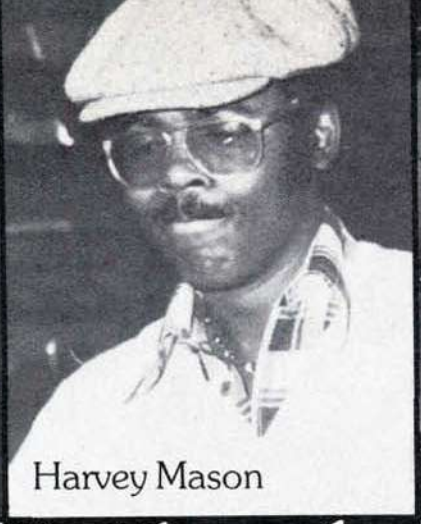
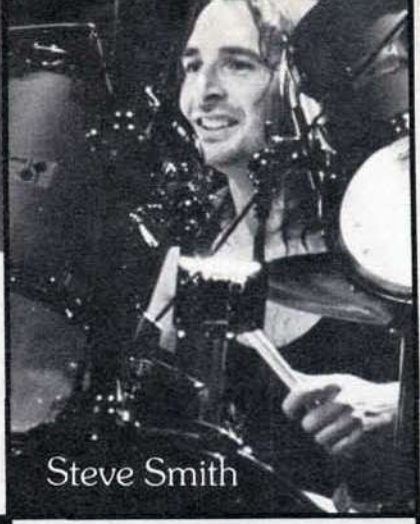


Harvey Mason

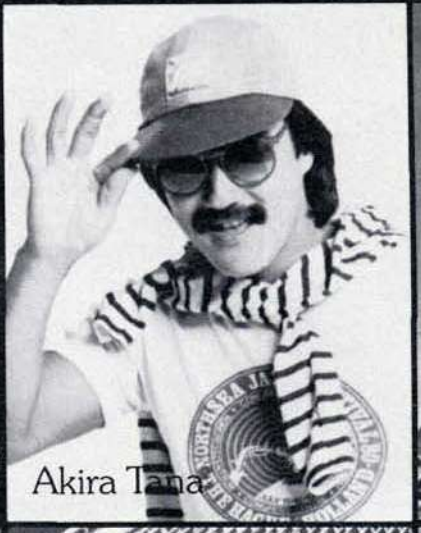


Steve Smith

Vinnie Colaiuta

Denny Carmassi

"What do these great artists have in common?



Akira Tana

Omar Hakim

Rod Morgenstein

ny Gottlieb

Gregg Bissonette

Dave Garibaldi

Keith Copeland

Paul Riddle

Ed Soph

They all make time with my sticks

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by Roy Burns

Do Big Name Drummers Really Play Better?

I have heard people say, when speaking of another drummer, "He is as good as any big name drummer. He just never got a break." I have also heard this comment, "The only difference between one drummer and another is fame. They are equally good except for publicity."

I do believe that there are many young drummers with great talent who have received little or no publicity. Carl Allen, the brilliant drummer with Freddie Hubbard, is a case in point. Although Carl has broken through to achieve some notoriety, he deserves more and I believe he will achieve it.

Another young drummer of great ability is Rick Latham from Texas. Rick, a contemporary musician with drive and surprising rhythmic ability, is slowly making a name for himself. When Jim Keltner heard him in California he said, "Who is this guy? Wow!"

Chad Rager, who now resides in the Midwest, is also a young drummer who gets looks of approval from the older heads in our business. He is with a group that is getting ready to cut their first album. In addition to being a terrific drummer, Chad is unusually articulate and his clinics have turned a lot of heads in his direction.

Joey Farris, from the South, plays jazz and southern funk equally well. He is the "new-guy-in-town" in New Orleans, and is already being noticed and hired by the top musicians in that city. He is also a fine teacher.

Chad Wackerman, who I have known since he was 12, has finally broken through with Frank *Zappa.* He has been playing very well for some time, but has just recently begun to receive the publicity and notoriety he deserves.

In a way, the first four drummers I mentioned just need some more breaks. I am certain they will continue to develop and build great reputations. I believe this because they are dedicated to being well-rounded, successful musicians in contemporary music.

My own theory about breaks and publicity is that, "You can't keep a good man down forever." If you play well and keep playing well, someone will hear you and give you a break. Then it is up to you to take advantage of the break and become a successful musician.

Sometimes a young drummer will get a break and blow it. Booze, drugs, being late and missing rehearsals are all ways to blow it. Becoming arrogant and thinking you have it made after achieving your first good job is another way to blow it. One break does not a career make. You must go from one opportunity to the next over a period of time in order to really establish yourself. You must earn your reputation.

You have to give credit to all of the big name drummers we have grown up with. To maintain and sustain a career over a period of years is no easy task. In order to do this, these drummers had to keep developing and learning all the time. Also, their experience helps them to keep growing. However, if you just sit back once you have achieved some publicity, you won't be famous for long. You must keep improving.

Last but not least, publicity and notoriety create pressure. People expect a lot from you and then continue to expect more and more. In a way, the old saying "You are only as good as your last performance" is really true.

The greatest drummers play their best under pressure. Pressure can come from other musicians. It can also be created by the need to always do a little more, to keep up with the times, to make a living, to do something new, to keep your energy up when traveling, and to play well even when you are tired or not feeling well.

If you are a talented young drummer, take heart! You will get your chance. You never know when opportunity will knock. It often comes when you least expect it. Remember, you never know who is in the audience—another drummer, a producer, a guitar player looking for a new drummer, a singer who wants to put a new group together or a record company executive—you never know. So, play your best every time and remember "You can't keep a good man down forever."

Here is what a few master-drummer-percussionists have to say about »The Sound of Brushes«.

After knowing Ed for lo, these many years, I can say with his experience, this book on The Sound of Brushes, I recommend. *»Papa« Jo Jones*

Ed Thigpen is the greatest, and »The Sound of Brushes« proves it! *Tony Williams*

Truly a good book from one of the masters of the drums. I recommend this book of a lost art that is very important. *Billy Higgins*

This is the most complete brush book written. *Jeff Hamilton*

An articulate, progressive, well organized approach to brush playing. An absolute must for any serious drummer. Great Succes! *Vic Firth*

Too often, brushwork has been ignored as much as possible by students and teachers alike. Naturally, this has resulted in some pretty bad brushwork in this day and age. Ed Thigpen has called upon his vast knowledge and written a book that should be included in **every** drummer's library, be he student or teacher, novice or professional. It's time someone wrote a definitive book on brushes and I believe that Ed Thigpen has done just that! Thank you, Ed! *Butch Miles*

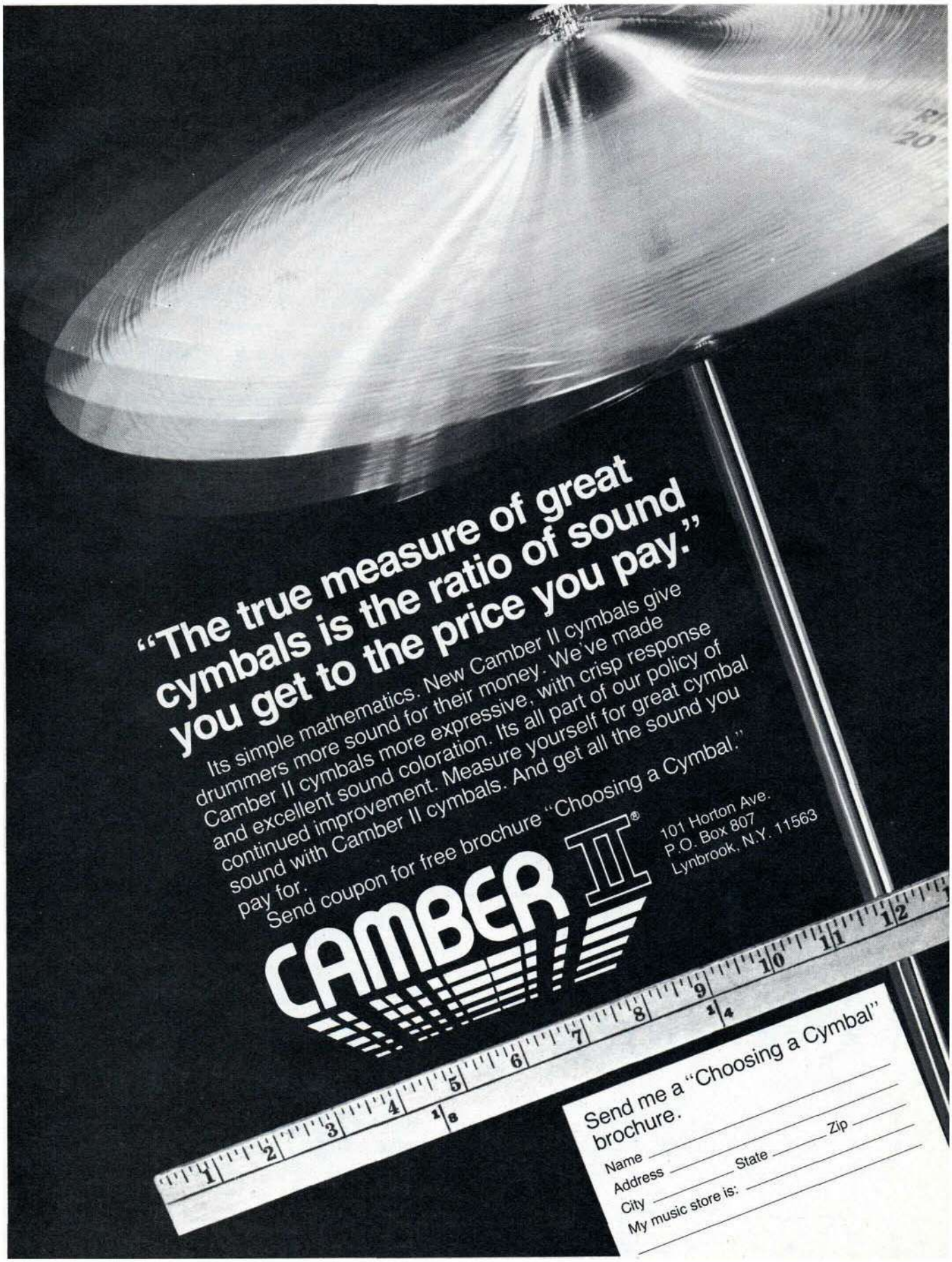
After speaking to Ed Thigpen and listening to the accompanying cassette tape, I've come to the conclusion that this book, »The Sound of Brushes«, is an essential element in everyone's educational library. Put it in the section marked »Percussion, Traps, Contemporary«. Try it! You'll like it! *Billy Cobham*

I would like to endorse your book and feel that it is a great teaching aid I would use for students. Brushes are totally ignored by so many young drummers today that I feel your book is even more valuable and should be exposed. Good luck with it and I hope it's a »hit«! *Harvey Mason*

Ed Thigpens »Sound of Brushes« book is a must for every serious drummer who wants to become a well rounded musician in the music bussiness. *Jack De Johnette*

Concerning »Rhythm Analysis and Basic Co-ordination«: Thanks to Ed Thigpen for giving us a book with a definite approach towards developing the creative aspect of modern drumming. *Max Roach*

Send M.O. or Check in U.S. $ 12,95 + 2,00 postage for The Sound of Brushes and $ 4,95 + 1,00 postage for Rhythm Analysis and Basic Co-ordination to Donald Meade/Action-Reaction U.S.A. 617 East 83rd St., Chicago, ILL. 60619.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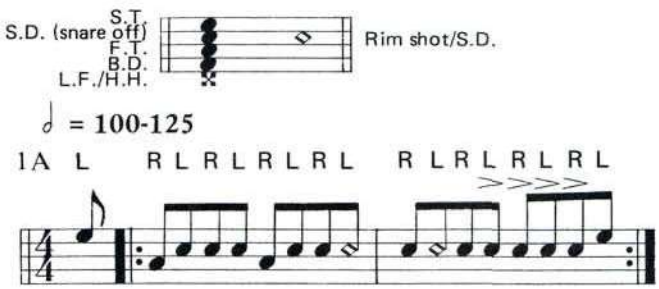
by George Marsh

Transferring African Rhythms

One of the most interesting drum lessons that I've ever had was when Kwaku Dadey showed me how to transfer African rhythms to the drumset. Kwaku plays traditional African music on his tuned conga drums in much the same manner as a piano player would imitate a full orchestra. The drumset player can play these African pieces by carefully tuning the tom-toms. The open tone of the congas is played on the set as the basic open drum sound. The high-pitched slap is emulated by playing a rim shot on the snare drum. The rim shots are *not* played loud; they are utilized as another color. The snare drum (with snares off) is the center drum from which the tom-tom melodies are played. Figure 1 is the first movement of a wrestling piece, played by the Ibo people of Africa.

The part for hands (Fig. 1 A) should be learned first. The melody (played on the floor tom and the small tom) should sing out. Therefore, it is important not to have the drums overly muffled. The tom-toms are playing one melody (the "call"), and the snare drum is playing a counter-melody (the "response"). The snare drum



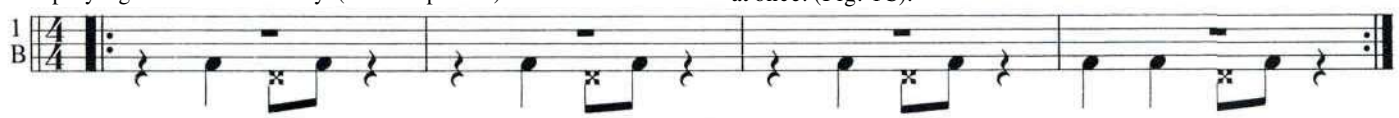
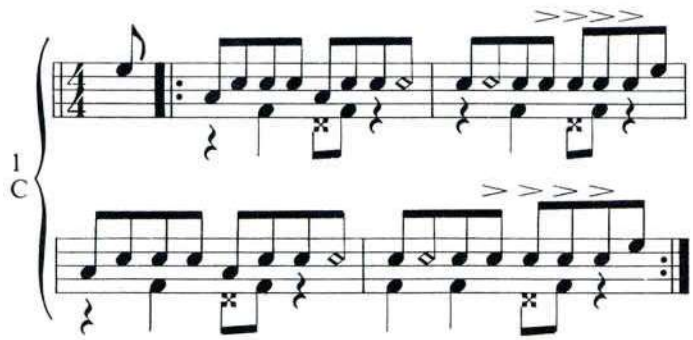
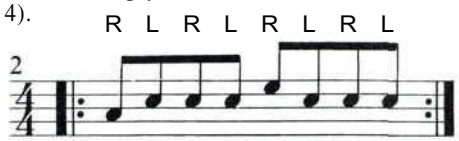
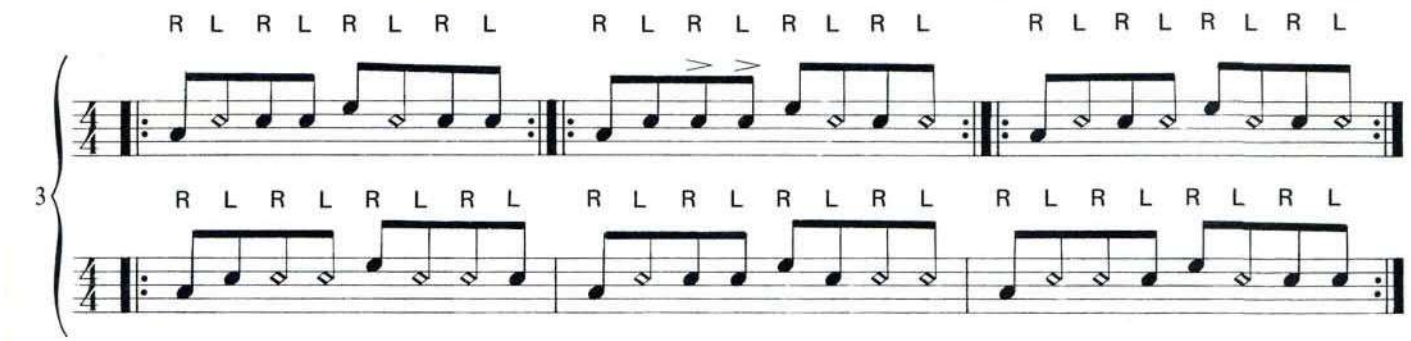
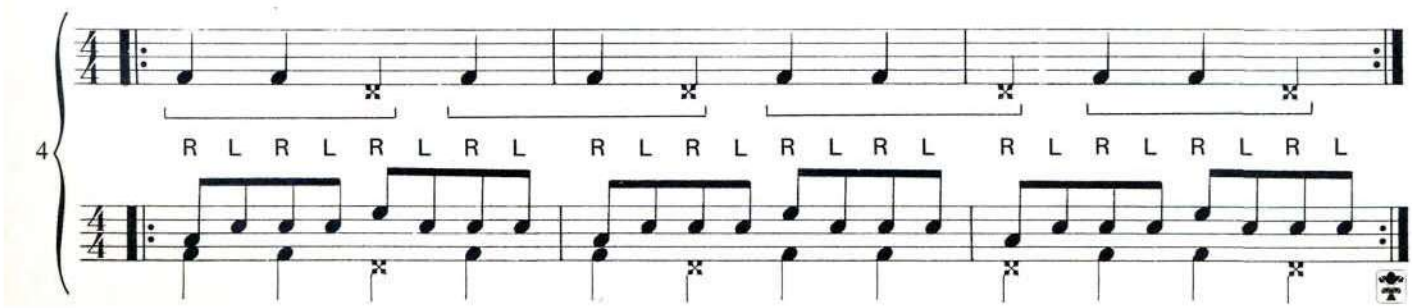
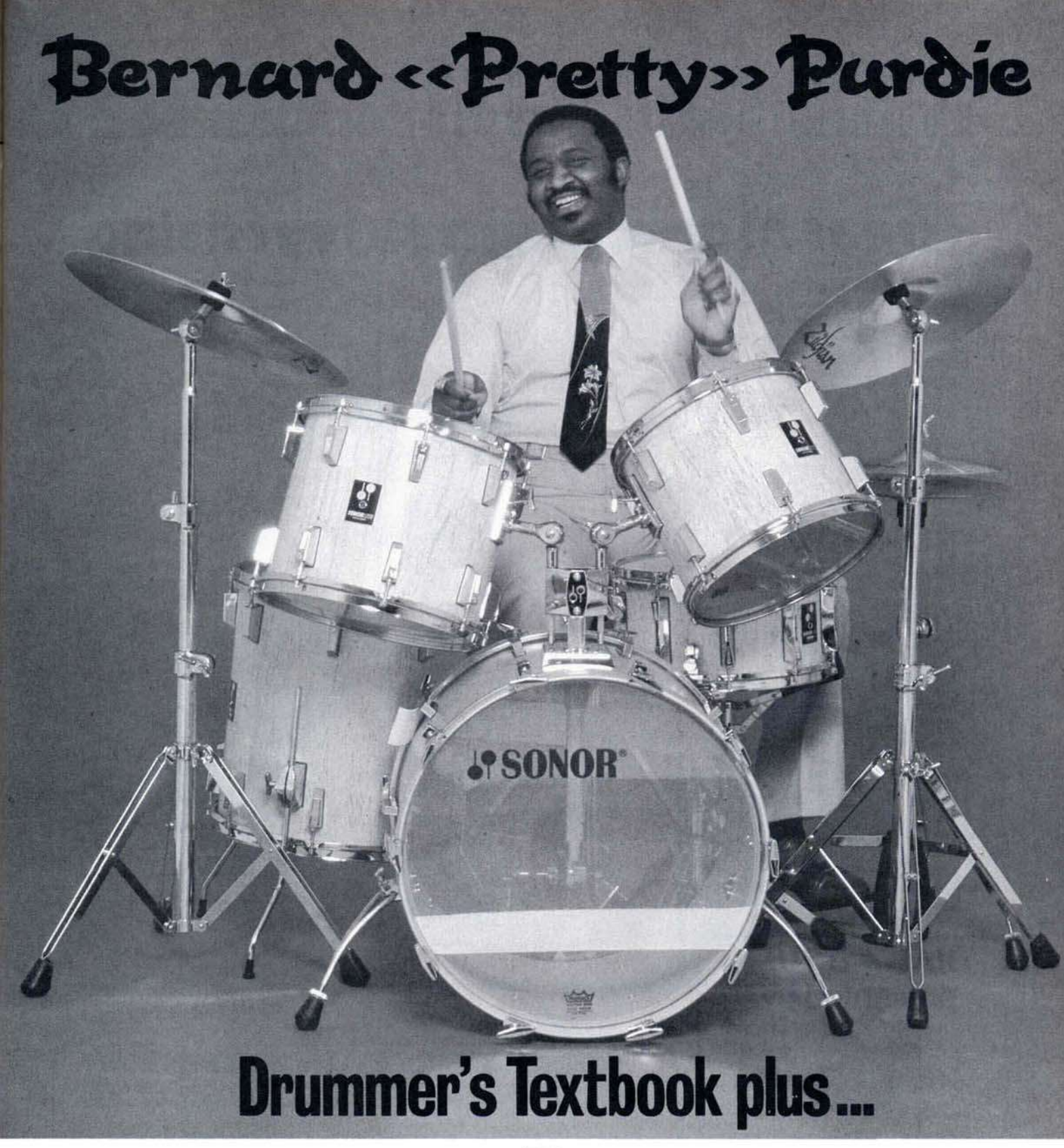
melody is manifest by rim shots and accents. After the hand part is mastered, practice the rhythms for the feet (Fig. IB). Note that this is a four-bar phrase. Bars three and four are the "response" to bars one and two (the "call"). When you are comfortable with the hands and the feet separately, you can proceed to play everything at once. (Fig. 1C).



Figure 2 is also part of the Ibo wrestling piece and is known as the "clock beat" because the melody is like a pendulum. The tom-toms are played with a clear singing tone, and the snare drum is played very lightly, except for accents and rim shots which are to be freely explored. The idea is to have the tom-toms *never* changing and the rim shots and accents playing in a *constantly changing* fashion. Figure 3 contains some rhythms to get you started with this beat. Practice simply at first. Later, add the bass drum and hi-hat. (Fig. 4).





Bernard «Pretty» Purdie



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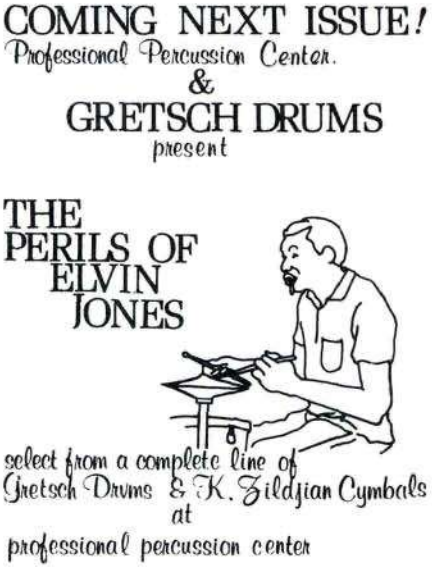

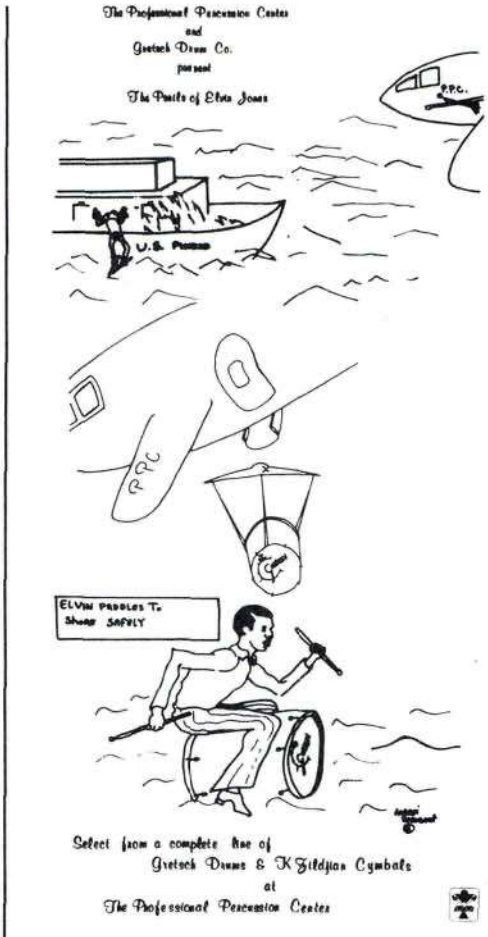

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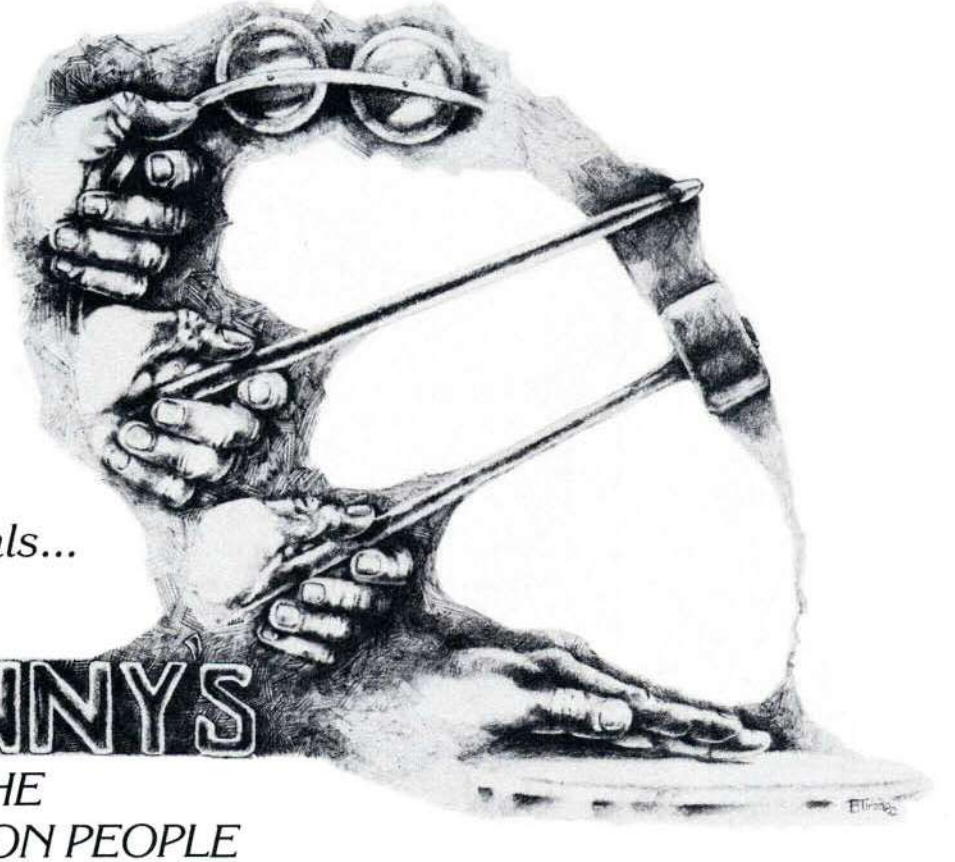

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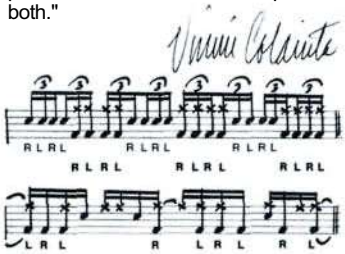
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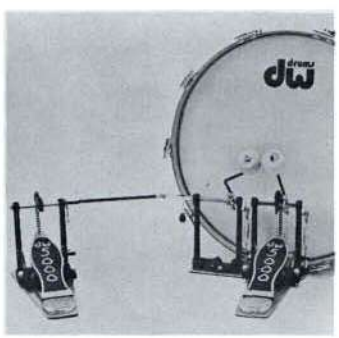

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Photo by Ebet Roberts

Palmer *continued from page 13*

rhythm guitar or maybe a rhythm keyboard—just to get the feel and the right emotion. After that, we go through various overdubbing stages which we had previously discussed. Obviously, it's all subject to change, but there's always a good idea. It takes a couple of months to lay down 14 tracks. We might only use 10, like we did. We have 14 only because we want a choice; we don't want to just lay down 10 tracks and say "That's our album." We'd rather do more and have the choice. After that, the overdubbing period takes the same. The reason it takes so long is because when you're overdubbing so many things, you've got to make sure that nothing clashes. We also used a 48 track. We recorded all the bass and drums on 24, and then we put the overdubs on the slave, and it does take time to get that all set up properly. This album took six months and the first one took five. I think the reason this one took slightly longer was that we moved to Canada.

RM: Why Canada?

CP: Well, the studio was excellent for what we needed to do. That was the first priority. Also, the producer had some tax problem with living in England. For me it was okay anyway. The rest of the band lives in England, but I haven't lived there for 10 years, so I could go wherever we wanted. It didn't make any difference to me.

RM: After you've finished recording an album, do you stay involved with the "product"?

CP: I'm interested in the business side of music; I enjoy getting things done properly within the structure, mainly because in the economy of the music business, there's not a lot of money for promoting records. So I enjoy making phone calls and making sure the wheels are turning the right way. I enjoy taking care of the product.

RM: Do you ever see yourself getting more involved with business than with playing, or are you only interested in the business that relates to your own music?

CP: Yeah, I think it's because I'm in it. I couldn't do it any other way. I couldn't become a manager. I mean, I *could,* but I wouldn't, because I'm a player first of all. It just so happens that I can't sit around and say, "Well, I'm just the drummer. The music will take care of itself." That's not a modern way of thinking. If I've been with something from its embryonic stage, I'm definitely not going to hand it over to some clown in a record company and assume he'll take care of it. I'm going to be on his back and want to know what's going on all the time.

RM: Is this a lesson you had to learn the hard way?

CP: Yeah. I learned it real quick when I was 18. I had a Number One album and single at the same time here in America with the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, and I would be too embarrassed to tell you how little money I made from that, considering the amount of units that were sold. So you do become aware.

RM: You once said you wished more peo-

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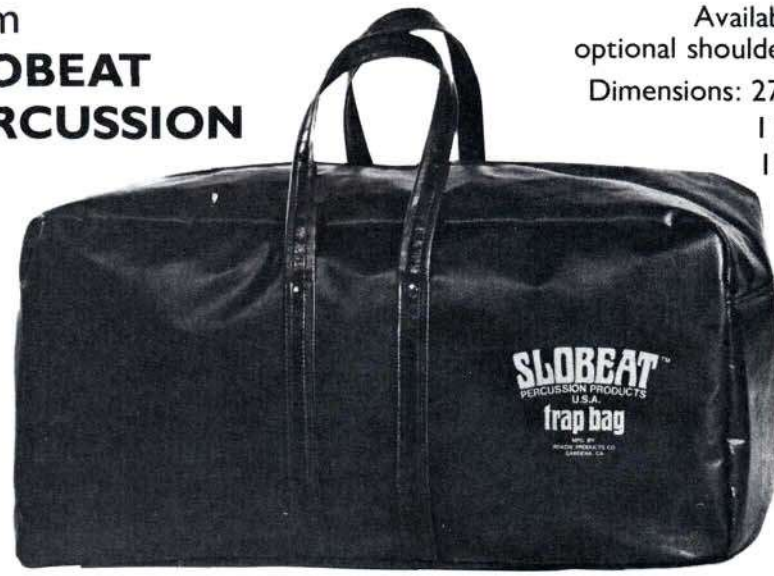

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pie would ask advice on how to collect royalties rather than on what kind of drumheads they should use. Do you see a trend where musicians are becoming more involved in their own business?

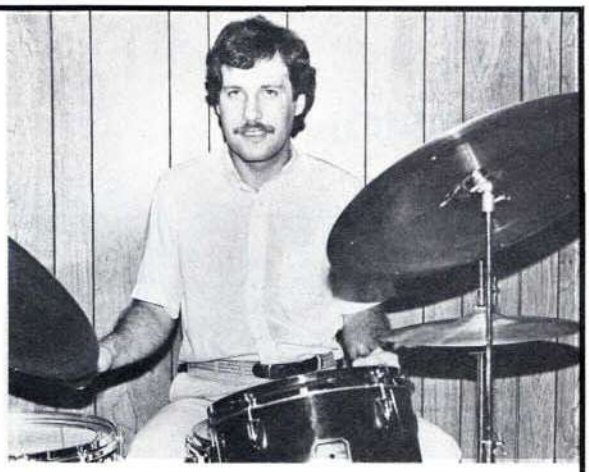
CP: The only trend is to be super careful. The reason why I made that statement is because you can always find out information about drumheads—that's not difficult—but there are certain things you have to know about the running of music, which I think are important. I mean, I go to see Buddy Rich play, and I can learn everything about his drumming by watching and listening. When I'm talking with him, we don't actually talk a lot about drums; he talks more about drums than I do. I ask him about how he runs his band, how he runs his life, how he keeps certain things together, when he is going to make another record, and all of that kind of stuff, because that's all part and parcel for me, you see. There are certain people who can talk about drums all day long, but at the end of the day, I don't want to be just the greatest drummer in this room. I mean, I could be a lot more visible than I am. I could do clinics all across the country, make drum videos, do a lot of interviews, and go with companies who would take out ads in all the magazines, but that doesn't interest me. I don't get off on that. I like to make good records and be a great drummer, but I don't like to use drum clinics, and teaching people, and personal exposure in drum magazines as a way of making a living. I want to do things like that because I really want to do them, not because they're going to be a source of income. I'd rather put my energies into something that does generate money for me and for the group of people I work with—because I always think of who I'm with; I don't just think of myself. I don't exploit myself as "Carl Palmer the drummer." For example, our first album sold four-and-a-half million copies. I'm surprised that no drum companies have offered to give me things in return for a line on the back of the album that says "Carl Palmer plays such-and-such drums." I could go out and chase that if I wanted to, but it doesn't interest me. I'd rather put my energy into making a good record. I'm talking broadly now; I'm not trying to pinpoint any one particular thing.

RM: A couple of days ago, I turned on my TV and saw you sinking into a pool of quicksand. That leads me to believe that the music business is not what it used to be.

CP: [laughing] Yeah, well . . . Video is another way, really, of promoting a product, and with MTV and the programs you have here in America, it's a perfect way of getting your product played. It's another way of putting across an image of a band without being real serious. The reason why I think this is healthy, apart from it being a great promotional vehicle, is that I know that there are certain groups who are going to come to America from England who have not had a lot of concert experience, and might not be great on stage. Even though they have record success, they might actually get booed off the stage. But what they might turn into, during the period of time that they're learning what to do on stage, is a video group *cum* record group, or record group *cum* video group, which means that there's another outlet for them while they're getting themselves together as far as putting on a good live performance. So I think it's a healthy thing for the business; I think it's encouraging, and I think it might stop a certain amount of groups from breaking up who can't go out and play as much. They can make videos, and I think the term "video group" is not a bad thing to talk about. At least it sort of gives them a chance. Okay, so they might not be playing their drums; they might be falling down the side of a mountain, or falling into quicksand, or whatever. But so what? If you're a fan and you bought the record, but you can't see the group in concert for whatever reason, you can see a video which was made under controlled conditions, and at least you're getting to see the group do something after you've purchased the record. So I like the idea of video.

I don't know how successful video will be for teaching purposes, as far as drum

SOMETHING MORE THAN DRUM LESSONS



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"I can conduct music like a business, but I never had any delusions that it was just about *that*. I started playing drums because it was fun and that's still why I do it. Forgetting about the phone calls, the diplomacy, the politics — when I'm actually playing the drums, I still get that same childish joy. It's fun."

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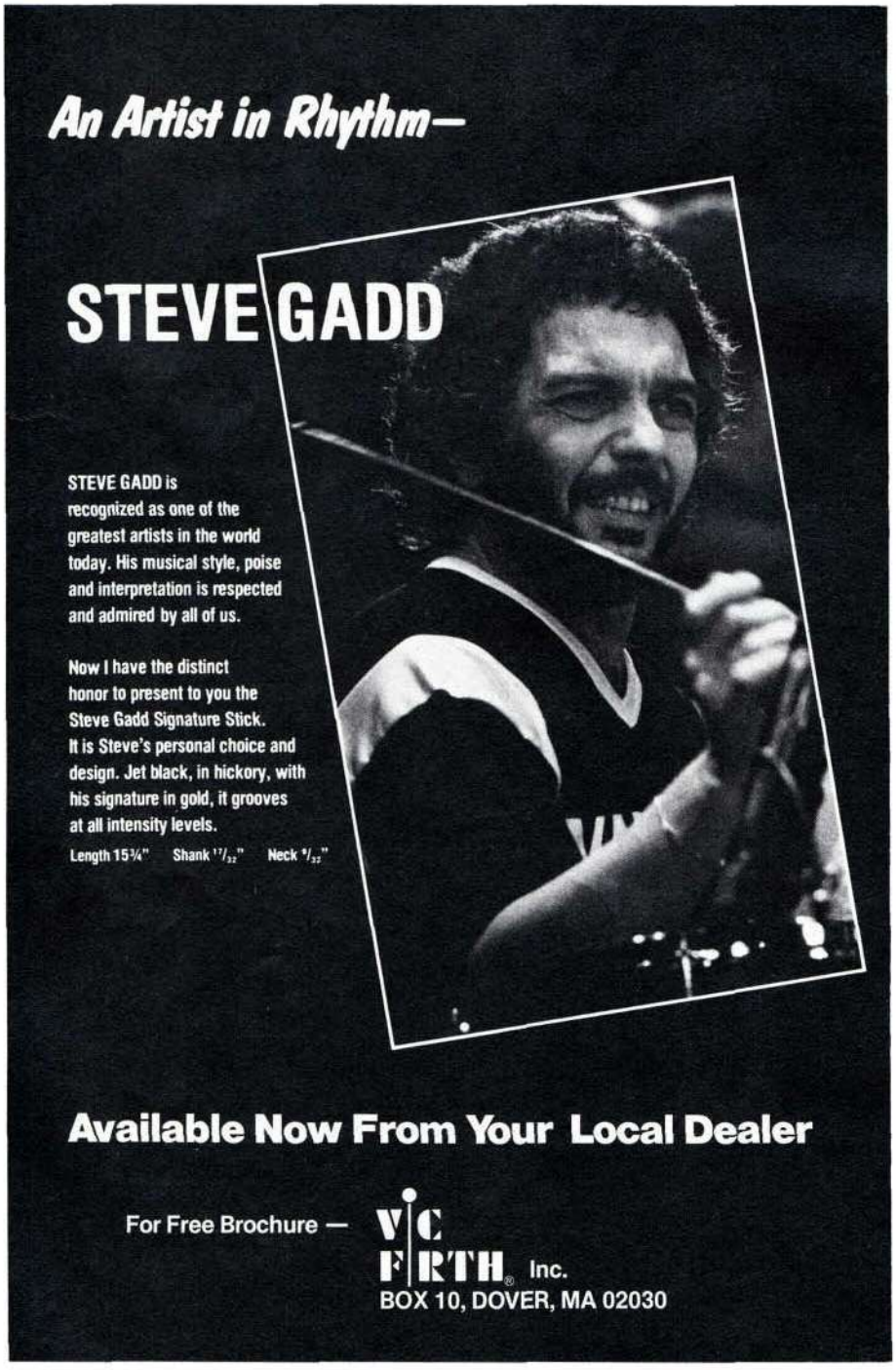
videos are concerned. But it's possible.
RM: Have you seen any of the drum videos yet?
CP: No. But I've just done a series in England for the BBC, called "Rock School." I did it about four months ago, and what they do is run a series in which they talk to various drummers, and in every program there is a five- or ten-minute Carl Palmer spot. I don't do drum clinics, but I decided I would do something like this because it would be more personal. It was on television, on a show, and I thought that was a better way of doing it. I mean, I could take all of these and put them together on an educational video, but I thought that was a little bit cold. I think that the idea of looking forward to something, just like I used to look forward to my drum lesson, and getting your last one down before you look in at the next one is great. I think it came out pretty good. I might do another one next year on tuned percussion, and maybe include a little bit about electronic percussion, depending on how well the series is accepted.
RM: Do you think the series will be shown in America?
CP: I very much doubt it. Television here is very different. If it's not a soap opera, it's a detective, and if it's not a detective, it's the weather or the news you're looking at. Or you might get a disco program if you're lucky.



RM: That kind of thing could be shown on PBS.
CP: That's possible.
RM: In our annual Readers Poll, you always do well in the classical category.
CP: Yeah, that's strange, isn't it. [laughs]
RM: I guess that all goes back to ELP doing *Pictures At An Exhibition.*
CP: Yeah, that's where it comes from. There's nothing I can really tell you about that. The funny thing is, I've played in the London Symphony Orchestra for maybe four days in my whole life. First of all, my roots started in jazz. I studied with a jazz drummer, Bruce Gaylor, who was a student of Ralph Pace. Then I was in a sort of Lawrence Welk-type orchestra until I was about 15 1/2, which was quite good for my reading. From there I joined a group, and I've been in groups from the age of 16 until now, which is a considerable length of time—17 years. With Emerson, Lake & Palmer, however you want to put it, it was a rock group playing classical adaptations. I've recorded that percussion concerto, which no one has heard, and my ambition is to play at Radio City Music Hall. I have a complete program set up for that, including dancers and stuff. But I think people term me as a "classical" rock drummer becaue of what has happened in the past, and because they know that Emerson, Lake & Palmer toured with an orchestra, and when Keith [Emerson] played his concerto, I didn't leave the stage—I couldn't resist playing some crotales or whatever. So I think that's where it all comes from, but it's ironic, really, because I've made my living being a rock drummer. That's what I do best. I think it was the fact that I hadn't toured in this country; I didn't tour from '79 until last year. People tend to remember how you were, instead of what you're actually doing now.

I did better in your last poll than I have ever done, and I think it's because of the success of Asia. I'm actually out there working. That means an awful lot. The more times people see you, the more times you can actually influence them. So all of a sudden I'm in two or three of those categories there, whereas from '79 to '82, I was lucky to be in one of them.
RM: Did you ever have any ambitions to be a classical percussionist?
CP: I like dabbling. If I had my life to do again, I might not be doing what I'm doing. But if I had to choose within music, I think I'd love to be a timpanist. The thing is, my pitch is good, but not as quick as it should be if one is going to pedal things fast. I think on the tuned percussion side, I could never have been a Gary Burton, but I could have been up to standard for the repertoire. I don't think I could have been a master at vibraphone, but I think I could have been a pretty good timp player. From the first studies I took with Gilbert Webster, it was like a fish to water. It was so easy; I felt really comfortable with it. Play-

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ing drumset, you know, I've always felt that. But the timpani have such a grand sound, and I've always liked bass frequencies anyway. I have a set of the Ringer timpani, and they're great. I also have a set of the Saul Goodman chain timps—three of those—and I have the Premier *Elite* timps, which I play on stage. I just love timpani.

RM: You have had more formal training than most rock drummers. What do you feel that gives you that they don't have?

CP: Well, what it did was improve my reading, number one, because you don't really get that in jazz training, where the emphasis is on independence and stuff like that. And I just wanted to see that sort of classical snare drummer side; I sort of wanted to know about xylophones and all of that, and just dive a little more into my instrument. I didn't want to be known as just a rock drummer—it doesn't seem that I'm known as one anyway. I wanted to check it all out. I realized that there were only certain ways I could make my living and still be happy. I know I could be in an orchestra and sit in that section. I might not be able to go straight in and be the timp player, because I really don't have as much experience, but I know that is what I'd like to do. There was an attitude within my family, because my family is musical back to my grandfathers, that you should always kind of get set up for the next job. To call yourself a "blues drummer" is like wearing the same jacket your whole life. I like to know that I can go off and play in an orchestra, or go play in a great rock group, or even in a punk group downtown. I think being a drummer, or percussionist, you're crazy if you don't open all the doors, because it's one of the few instruments—if not the *only* instrument—with which you can use your own style for various types of music. From that point of view, it's the universal instrument. I know from a composing point of view, piano is number one, for sure, and I love piano. But if you just want to play a lot of different kinds of music on a high caliber, being a drummer or percussionist is one real good way of doing it, if you're prepared to study.

I think taking classical training opened that side up to me a little more, because that was a side where there were a few dark areas that I needed to know about. I'm very inquisitive. I've lived in Spain for 10 years, and I've become a great hand-castanet player. I'll never use that for anything, but it was something I just wanted to know. That's not to say that I'm a great studier. I just like to know a bit about different things. I wanted to learn how to do a single-stroke roll with one hand, and a lot of people said, "Oh, you can't do that." I said, "Well, okay." Then I met someone in a terrible bar in the southern part of England who said, "I read an interview where you said you wanted to do a one-hand roll." I said, "Yeah, I *know* it's possible." He said, "I don't play, I just learned this gimmick." So I said, "That's great! Will you show it to me?" It's kind of interesting; you sort of use the drumstick like a paintbrush. It's of no value, unless you just want to impress somebody. It's not going to sell another record; it just gives you another feather in your hat. But at least I know it. It's never going to bring me any fame or fortune, but I think gathering knowledge—whether it's playing castanets or doing something like that—keeps you aware. So I've got a wide outlook, and I think the classical thing just happened to open a few doors for me. I don't think it made me a better rock drummer than anyone else. I just know that if I was called on to do certain things, I do have experience in those areas, which I think is valuable.

RM: Have you ever been in a situation where you have had to restrain your technique?

CP: Well, I do at the moment, in certain songs. I mean, I could do a lot more, but it wouldn't be beneficial to the song; it would be beneficial to me. I think that providing I can have that release in my solo, then it's fine. If you've got a lot of technique, then obviously there are more chances you can take; there are more ways of playing the same thing. But unfortunately, when you're dealing with structured songs, sometimes you do need to play a chorus the same way twice. It's the way it is, you know what I mean? Okay, you could be a complete innovator and play it different every time. Our music doesn't go with that train of thought, so we have to be a little more structured.

RM: People are always striving for technique, and yet, those who have a lot of technique are often criticized for being cold and mechanical.

CP: You can't win, can you. I mean, the thing is, you have to have a lot of technique, really, to have my sort of way of doing things. The way I look at percussion in general, you have to have a certain amount of technique to get any enjoyment out of experimentation with different music. You've got to have good technique to play certain snare drum parts, and you've got to know your way around the vibraphone a little bit. So it's all relevant.

RM: How do you think your knowledge of instruments like vibraphone, and your knowledge of melody and harmony, have affected your drumming?

CP: I don't really think it's affected my drumming at all. I don't think it's hindered it; I don't think it's helped it too much either. It makes you more aware, but they're two different instruments completely, to me.

RM: Sometimes drummers are accused of not knowing anything about music; they just play beats.

CP: Well, you know, as far as songs are concerned, I always map out a rough part of like intro, middle eight, link passages, choruses, verses, or whatever. I always like

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to know the complete structure. I don't need to have the chords written down, unless I want to play the piece myself. I've got a little Casio keyboard now, with a drum machine in it. I don't play keyboards very well, but it does help to know it. However, there are some great drummers who know nothing about tuned instruments, so its hard to say really. As they say, "Differences of opinion make horse racing possible."

RM: Fair enough. Let's talk about drums. You've changed companies since your last interview.

CP: Well, I'll tell you how extreme I am about equipment. I have been with Premier drums for, I guess, five years. I'm still playing the set they gave me five years ago; a set which I got them to make for me with all-metal shells. There are two 24" bass drums, 10", 12", 13", and 14" standard-depth tom-toms, two floor tom-toms—one is 18", the other is 16"—a Ludwig *Black Beauty* snare drum with Premier die-cast hoops and a Premier 2000 snare release, and all Premier hardware. I use Paiste cymbals—22" ride, 20" crash, 18" and 16" crashes, 15" hi-hats, 22" and 24" China type. Then I've got a couple of timps, three Simmons modules—a snare drum module and two tom-tom modules—and the gongs, one about 30 centimeters, the other about 50 centimeters. That setup, apart from the Simmons, which I've only just added, is a five-year-old setup. I've not really changed it, except when I added the 10" drum. I figured I was odd on top; I had three and two, so I figured it should be four—like a chord sounding. I'm intending to scale down and not have as many. I think I could get away with two tom-toms, two floors toms, two bass drums and some Simmons equipment, and maybe even some small electronic timps instead of the real ones, some cymbals and the gongs. I haven't changed anything as of yet; it's been this way for about five years.

I just purchased a Leedy snare drum from Charlie Donnelly. It's a wood-shell drum which I'll be playing tomorrow night. I'll try it out, and if it's better than the Ludwig, I'll use that for a while. I've been considering playing some wooden drums, which I did try with Gretsch, but I got despondent with the company because they kept changing their address and it was hard to get a hold of anybody, so I went to the nearest thing, which was Premier.

RM: Gretsch seems to have stabilized in the last couple of years.

CP: Well, I think they're an excellent shell, and those die-cast hoops are fantastic.

RM: Some people complain that everyone's drums sound the same these days—that dead studio sound—but yours are real open.

CP: I don't really confess to being a greater tuner of drums. I'm never happy with the sound I get. I get a good bass drum sound, I get a good snare drum sound, and I'm good at picking cymbals. I've never ever got what I consider to be that "happening" sort of tom-tom sound. Whether that be my tuning, or using metal-shell drums instead of wood-shell drums, or just the drums themselves—the depth, the diameter, or whatever—I've never even heard someone else's where I say, "That's the sound." They just don't ever sound as good as they should. I'll be honest with you—the people at Premier are going to love this—I know that the Sonor drums sound pretty good, but you have to hit them so hard. I'm not such a big guy, and the sticks I use are not like telegraph poles or anything like that, so I don't know if I could actually hit them hard enough to get a good sound out of them, but they do sound good. I don't know what they'd sound like in a band—that's another test, as it were—but they do sound alright.

RM: I always thought you had a "classical" snare drum sound; I can really hear the snares.

CP: Yeah. I mean, producers don't like that sound, because they like the old "thud." I don't play that way. I've got this *Black Beauty* which really is a loud drum, and it's tuned fairly tight. I must have about 500 snare drums, and I'm still buying them; this is a fetish with me; I keep thinking that one day there will be *that one.* Anyway, I'm going to try tuning the drum the way I always tune it, but I'm going to use a wooden shell, so I'II get the best of both worlds. I get a little bit of that sort of meaty sound, but I've still got the top end in there for me. When you use the metal shell, it's not as meaty sounding, but it is bright, and it does tend to cut through. I tend to think that with Asia, that top end is good, but I need something a bit in between. I'm going to try this Leedy drum and see if it helps. But then, you could talk to me tomorrow and I'll say it's the metal shell.

RM: You should get with Jim Keltner; he collects snare drums too.

CP: Oh yeah? I was offered five yesterday, but I can't just collect them. I've got to be able to play them, and this Leedy is a playable drum.

RM: You told me that you were trying to get a Gladstone drum. Surely you wouldn't take a drum like that on the road.

CP: Oh yes. That will not go in any cabinet. The only cabinet that will be in will be on stage. My whole thing in life is, whatever I've got, I use. I don't sit in the kitchen and have dinner; I go into the dining room. A lot of people don't; they keep it all nicely polished, just to look at. No. If anyone's going to scratch that table, it's going to be me. That's how I look at things. The same with the drum. I mean, I would clean it, and obviously look after it, and I'd probably take it away with me and not let it go with the equipment, but I would definitely use it. It's pointless to have it if you don't use it. You're only here once; life's short. I

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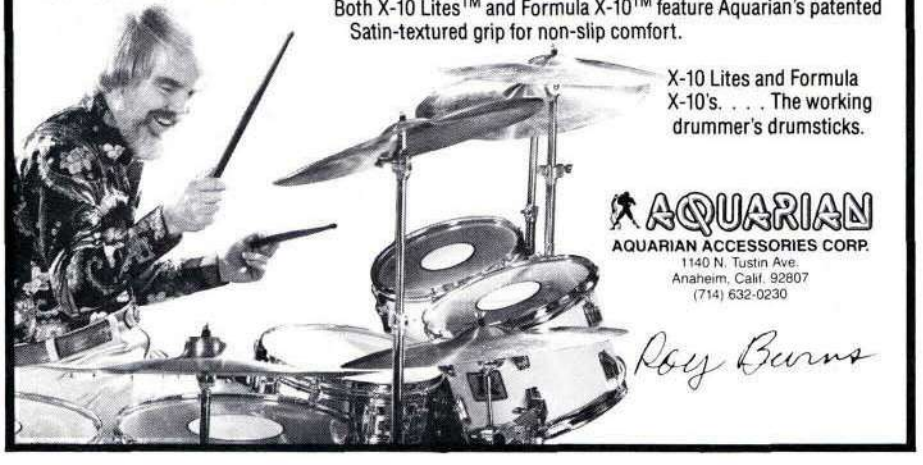

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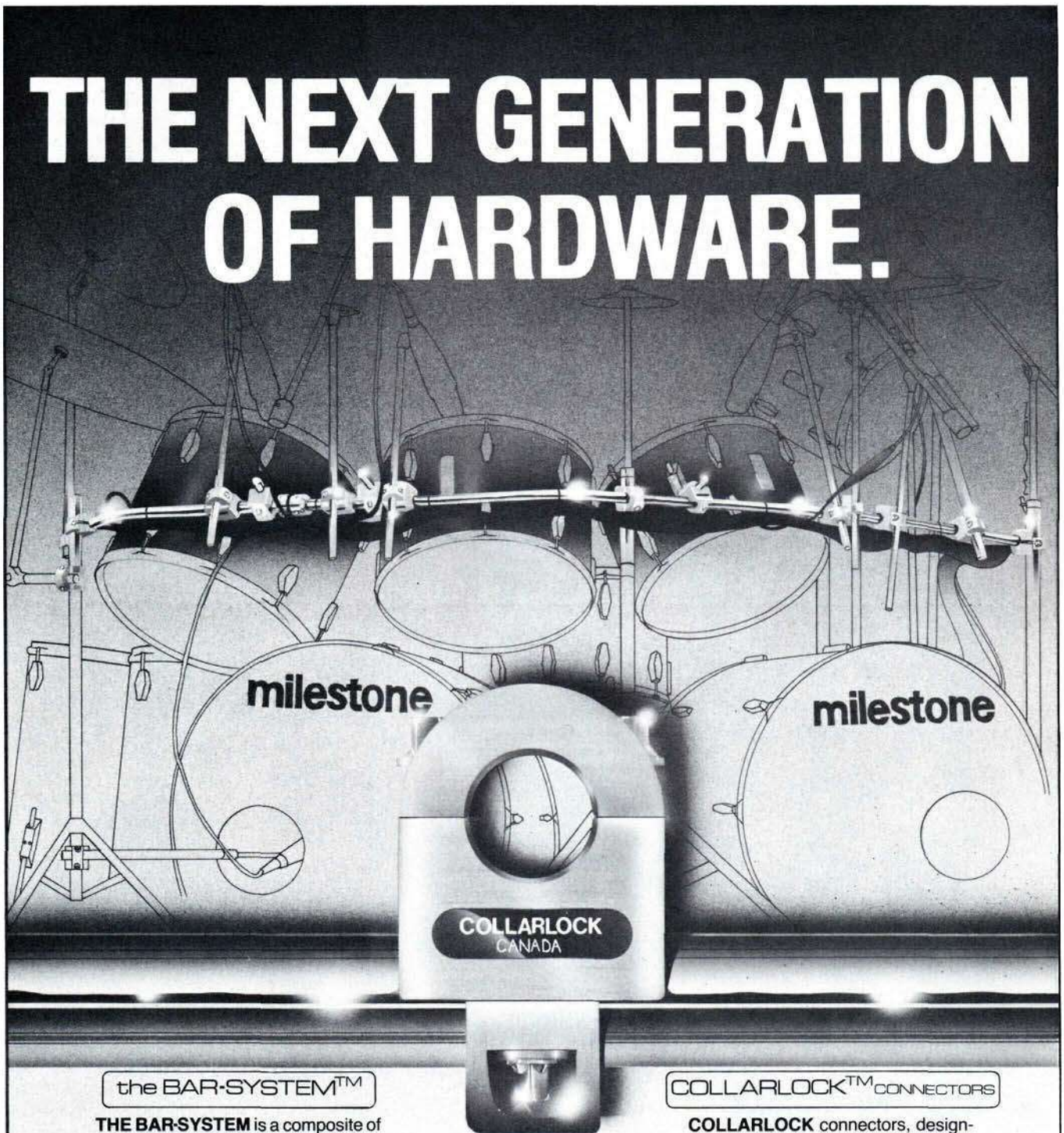

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played Shelly Manne's Gladstone drum once. It was fantastic.

RM: So we should watch for a Gladstone snare drum on stage with Asia?

CP: Oh yeah. If I get it, it'll be there every night.

RM: Moving from the old to the new, in your previous interview you said that you were resisting electronics. Now, you're using Simmons drums.

CP: Yeah, I do. Well, prior to that interview, I had actually recorded on electronic drums with Emerson, Lake & Palmer on the *Welcome Back My Friends* album. I had eight synthesizers which were built for me, about the size of cigar boxes, and I recorded a piece by Ginastera, called "Con Brio" and I had an electronic drum section in that which I think people still assume was Keith. With the electronics I had, the acoustic drums triggered the synthesizer, and I had the sound of the drum and the synthesizer mixed together. I enjoyed them, but I didn't think they were musical enough. That was the only time I recorded them. They gave me a lot of trouble, to tell you the truth; "Will they work? Won't they work? Will the octave divider switch work?" I used them for maybe two or three years, and then I stopped all the electronic gadgetry. It wasn't until about six months ago that I got hold of some Simmons, because I liked the way they sounded. Unlike everyone else, instead of having the Simmons pad, I've got the ones that look like a man's head. I use the snare drum module within the music, and I use the other two as part of my solo, just as another color. I've been thinking about doing a changeover completely, or maybe a 70/30—70% electronic and 30% still basic drumset. But to get different sounds with these Simmons, it does mean you have to carry a certain amount of outboard equipment. So it's something I'll have to think seriously about. I think it's possible for me to get the best of both worlds, but I can't do it with the equipment I've got. As wonderful as the drumset is played by many people today, I personally think that in rock music, it has become the dinosaur of the stage environment. In other words, there is no way you can hear these thunderous tom-toms. They always sound nice, but they never sound like *"WOW\ What is that!"* I think it's about time that it all got updated a little bit.

RM: Have you ever used anything like a Linn machine?

CP: Yes. We have a Linn machine which we use onstage. I like the fact that if you put something in the machine that is odd, it'll actually correct it for you. We don't use it a lot. I tried recording with one playing at the same time, but it didn't work. Next I tried recording that on its own, with me coming in on the middle eight, and that didn't work. Then I tried it the other way around—me playing and the machine coming in—and that didn't work. So it's like all or nothing. It's either the machine, or it's the drummer. It's hard to get the combination together.

RM: There are still people who worry that the drum computers are going to put drummers out of work.

CP: It's not really enough though, is it? The problem is, I've noticed that the choruses in our songs speed up a bit, and there's no way that by the time we finish it's going to be the same tempo as when we started. I don't think that anyone could truthfully say that that's bad. I think that the drummer can actually give a bit more excitement because he does speed up. I think this cold, regimented thing that goes on is very nice to make demos, and it's excellent for disco records, but it does take away a little bit of the emotion. Even though you can put fills in and program the shit out of the thing, there comes a time when all drum machines fall down. This has to do with my analysis of time. I always think that the bass plays right on the beat, any lead instruments play behind it—so they can weave in and out—and I always think the drummer plays in front of it—always giving the edge; always making it go. But with the rhythm box, it's always so much on the nose that it feels sterile. I think the Simmons drums might help the situation because you can get all of that sound happening, and you can physically play it.

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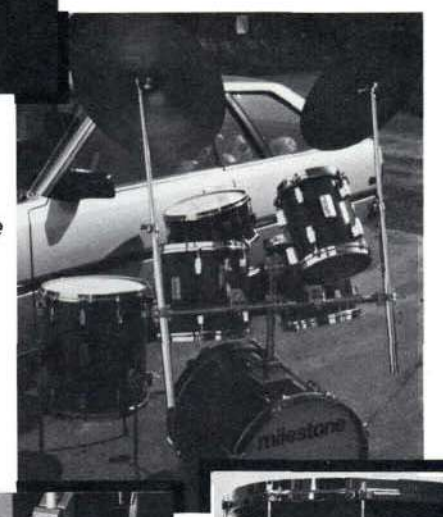

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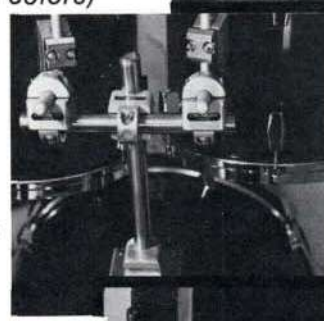

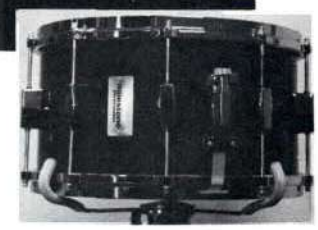

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RM: Most drummers talk about laying back; you're one of the few I've talked to who plays ahead.

CP: Well, that's my way of thinking about it. I expect the bass player to be right on it, the drummer to give it the excitement, and the lead instrument to give it the emotion.

RM: That reminds me of Peter Erskine's belief that drummers shouldn't just mark the time; they should *propel* it.

CP: Well, that's what I mean by being in front, you see. Not racing away—it's just a small thing we're talking about here. But that's the way it's always been in bands that I've been in. I've always been a bit "edgy." But that's what drums are meant to be. I don't think a drummer should be right on the spot. It's boring. It should be to the point where it's exciting, although not to the point where it's pulling. It's not as extreme as that. It's a fine line, which I think is probably the mark of a lot of good jazz drummers. It's basically a jazz drummer argument really, not so much a rock musician argument. But I think it is valid.

RM: You mentioned that your roots were in jazz. Do you ever play jazz anymore?

CP: I haven't played any for a long time. We don't jam at all. I can't remember the last time actually.

RM: Is there still a jazz drummer inside you somewhere who's going to reappear at some point?

CP: Maybe. It's just that I haven't been in the right environment. The last time I sat in with a band was at some rock concert in Spain.

RM: Do you ever go out to hear jazz musicians play?

CP: Well, I went out the other night to hear Louie [Bellson] and Buddy play.

RM: I'm always amazed by the fact that English rock drummers always talk about how much they were influenced by jazz drummers.

CP: The first drum record I ever had was *Drum Crazy* on Columbia records, and it was the soundtrack from *The Gene Krupa Story,* with Sal Mineo playing the part of Gene Krupa. The second one I had was *Buddy Rich Sings Johnny Mercer.* I traded that one for *This One's For Basie* by the Buddy Rich orchestra, and then it was off to the races. I think that I then listened to stuff like Elvin Jones. My family liked jazz.

RM: Did you ever try to imitate the styles of any of the jazz drummers you were listening to?

CP: I didn't consciously try to play like them, but I guess I played like everybody when I was a kid, because I'd play along with a record, and sort of get sucked into playing *that* style. I think that's part of the process of learning. I'm a great thief, you know. I lift a lot of things. I love it. I like to lift stuff and play it better. It's all been done before anyway. The real trick is taking whatever you've stolen and trying to do something different with it, but using that

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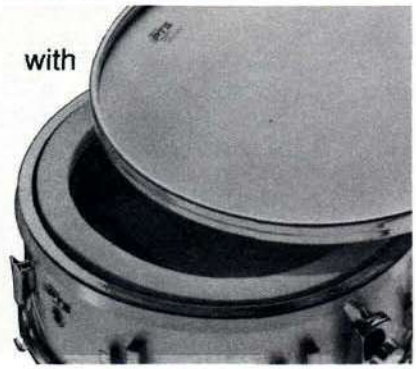

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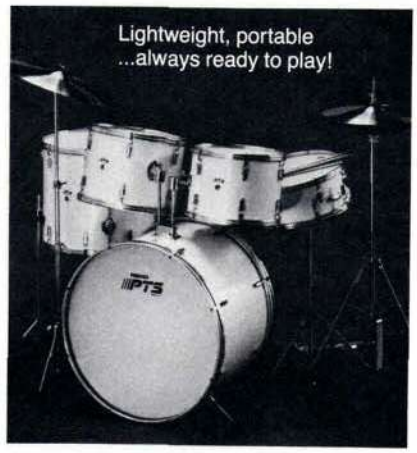

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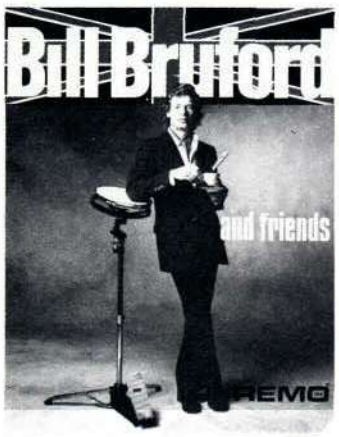

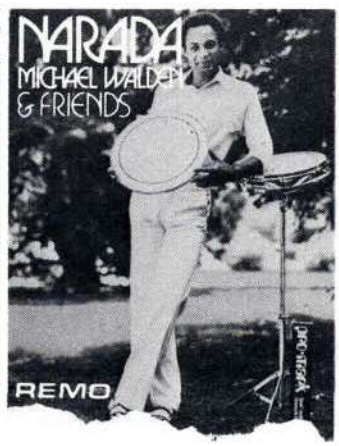

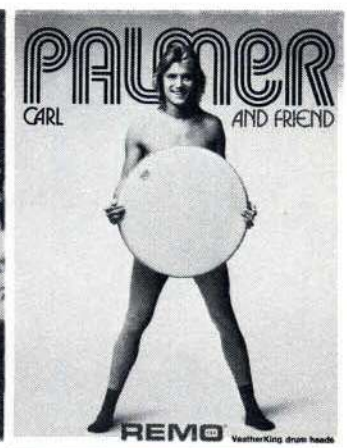

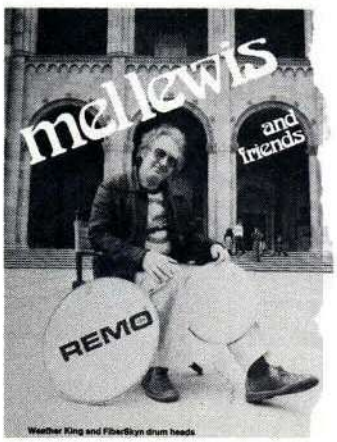

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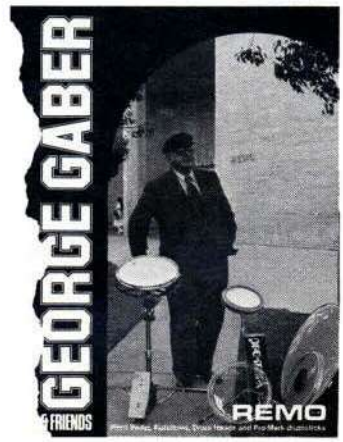

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as the source; using that as the foundation. I think it would be possible to imitate someone like Elvin Jones. But to come up with that and be that original is another kettle of fish. That is difficult. However, there are a lot of people who can copy styles. There are drummers who, if you don't listen to too hard, you might mistake for Buddy Rich, because they have obviously copied Buddy Rich. Anyone can learn someone else's licks.

RM: Have you ever heard a drummer who you thought was trying to copy you?

CP: No, not that I can think of. If I heard someone play something that I had played before, I think I would notice it. To tell you the truth, I don't actually listen to an awful lot of drummers. I didn't even hear Neil Peart play until recently. I kept seeing his name turn up in your magazine, so I went to see him. I mean, I had heard of the group, but I hadn't paid a lot of attention, because the music they play is not generally my style, not to say that what they are playing is bad. So I end up going to see drummers only when their names keep turning up, because there are so many. Of course, you can learn something from even the worst player, but I don't tend to go out and watch a lot of drummers play, unless they are of exceptional quality—and I do mean *creme de la creme* quality. There are a few, but not that many. I went to hear Louie Bellson and Buddy Rich together. Certain things that they play might not be as up-to-date as you'd like to hear, but the actual technique, what they do, and what they stand for is fantastic.

RM: And they were both innovators. People complain that all drummers today sound the same.

CP: Yeah, that's what Buddy was saying to me yesterday. He said, "Why do you all have to do those stupid triplets?" I said, "Well, I have to do a certain amount of those because the music really calls for it." I can't do some of the more off-the-wall things, because our music is not like that. It's *not jazz,* you know what I mean? That stuff is really needed. It's like french fries need salt.

RM: Ask Buddy why all the jazz drummers go "ting-ting-a-ting" on the cymbal.

CP: Right, [laughs] But, you know, I've had that argument with him, and he's pretty cool; he understands, because I think he knows that I *could* play something else. If I say that I think that's what I should play, he considers that I've obviously thought about it, but he still can't accept the fact that everybody plays those triplets. I do as many of those as anyone else. Billy Cobham built a career out of that, you know, so what can I tell you?

RM: Do you think that there are a lot of things that influence musicians besides how much they practice and who they listen to?

CP: Yeah, I think your day-to-day existence affects that hour-and-a-half performance for sure. I thrive on a certain amount of aggravation, myself. I like to go on in an aggressive mood, if I can. Not from a relationship point of aggression, but from an aggression of "I'd like to be the greatest; I'd like to be in the best group." The question of "Why haven't we sold the hall out?" stimulates me to play. If I know that we are one ticket short of selling out, that puts my nose out of joint enough to get wired up. And when it's full, it's the other way around—I'm just so pleased that I thrive on *that* excitement. I can't spend any time at the concert hall after the sound check. I leave, go back to my hotel room and lie down. I have to walk into the hall 20 minutes before I go on stage and feel the excitement like I've never been there before. I go through any quick warm-ups that I have to do to spark up the adrenalin, and then go for it.

RM: What about when the tour is over? What are some of the other influences on your life?

CP: I enjoy a healthy climate. I've lived in Spain for 10 years, in the Canary Islands, and I'm very happy there. I've got a daughter now. I teach some little kiddies at a school—I studied karate for several years; I don't actually practice myself any more, but I've got a gymnasium in my house and occasionally I'll work out, and I teach some kids from five to 12 years old. I get off on that, mainly from the point of view that they don't ask questions. You get kids who are 15 and they really want to know "Why?" I like people to learn things from an animalistic point of view; I like them to learn it through their bodies. Karate is real good for that. Actually, drumming is also something you can learn through your body. Just have a go, you know? You don't have to write it all down; you don't have to be that analytical. Although I've studied that way, I'm saying that the actions are natural. It's also something that has to be preserved at an early stage if possible.

I enjoy being healthy; I enjoy being fit, active, going to bed early, not drinking a lot, and not smoking. I play two ball games—a bit of tennis and a bit of golf. I like swimming, I go fishing, and at the most, I might practice about 45 minutes to an hour a day. I might end up having dinner at night with a classical record playing, and waking up in the morning listening to a noisy rock 'n' roll band playing, and in the afternoon, it depends on how I feel. I don't go to too many concerts; I go to a little bit of theater. Those are basically my activities.

RM: I guess that's why you're still vital. Some rock 'n' rollers don't live to be 33, and if they do, they look like they're 43.

CP: Right. Well, there's only so many bottles of wine you can drink. I'm going to be around for a long time, so I don't have to suck up all this stuff right now. There's no big rush, really.

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by Simon Goodwin

Dressing for Drumming

"I want to be judged on my playing, not on my appearance!" How often have we heard that or something similar said? It is, unfortunately, a vain hope. Right or wrong, it is human nature to judge by appearances, and sadly the average non-musician is often unable to discriminate between a musical performance which is good, and one which is merely passable. So if you want to create a good impression, looking right is half the battle.

When you play gigs, you are setting yourself up to be looked at, as well as listened to. People who pay to come into the place where you are playing are paying (even indirectly) to see you! The people in your audience have probably dressed up a bit for an evening out, and they will not be impressed if they are better dressed than the musicians they have come to see.

Your attire might not affect your musical performance, but it does affect public relations, marketing and selling your product to the public. If you want your music to be noticed, your appearance is an important part of your job. Packaging your product to present it to the public is not always a matter of dressing in the conventional style. Many of the most successful artists and bands achieved notoriety by presenting a drastically unconventional image and thereby outraging people. If you are in the sort of band that wants to approach the public in this way, it is important for you to go along with this practice and be part of the team. You are a performer.

Be Practical And Comfortable

I am *not* a fashion writer and I am not going to offer hints about what the best-dressed bands should be wearing this season. The choice of band clothes is dependent upon the musical and marketing policy of the band and the type of venues you play in. There are, however, some practical considerations which are well worth looking at. Discourage the musician or manager who wants to put the band into uniforms which have been chosen entirely for their sartorial elegance regardless of how comfortable they will be to play in, or how they will stand up to the rigors of being used as stage wear. It has always been a contention of mine that when it comes to comfort, drummers deserve special consideration. No other musician has to put the same amount of physical effort into his playing, and no other musician has to sit in exactly the same position, with both feet planted on pedals, throughout the performance. You must be comfortable when you play. If you are not, your playing is bound to suffer. It is difficult to concentrate properly on the music if you are worried about the way you feel. The answer is obvious: Don't let other people force you into clothes which are either too hot or too tight to play.in.

This last statement might seem to contradict what I already said about conforming to the image of the band. If you have any say in what the band uniform/image is to be, make sure that these practical considerations are not overlooked. It is sometimes necessary for the drummer to consider his special status and take care of his own problems. Unfortunately this can involve a little extra expense, but it should be worth it. I am the only member of my band with a jacket without a lining. Removing the linings from jackets can ruin them, so I don't advise you to do it yourself, unless you have that particular expertise. A good tailor, or a shop which does alterations can advise you. Ask at the shop where you buy the clothes. They often do inexpensive alterations on clothes they are selling. If you can afford to have the clothes made-to-measure, so much the better. The choice of detail is there from the start.

Another alteration which is useful for drummers to have done is the shortening of sleeves. Neanderthal types with long arms won't find this a problem, but I find that most off-the-rack shirts and jackets have sleeves which are just a bit too long for comfort when handling sticks; the butt ends get caught up in them. A similar problem is to be found with flared trousers. The beater on the bass drum pedal gets trapped inside the trouser leg. Flares are no longer fashionable, so these days fewer drummers have to wear cycle clips or stuff their trouser bottoms into their socks.

For The Free-Lance Drummer

If you are a free-lance, jobbing drummer, you are likely to find yourself playing in a variety of musical situations requiring a variety of clothes. A dress suit (Tuxedo) and/or a black velvet jacket with black trousers is a must for most hotels, clubs and theaters if the band is made up of free-lance musicians. If you are subbing in a band which has its own uniform, the band members will probably be able to lend you certain essential items. If not, you will be asked things like, "Have you got a red shirt?" Now, if you are able to blend visually with a band when subbing, there will be one less problem for the leader to worry about and you will therefore be more desirable as a sub. For this reason, it is a good idea to build up a wardrobe of all the most likely things you might be asked to wear. Have some shirts in all the obvious plain colors, as well as some white ones. Some of these shirts should be suitable for wearing with a tie (bow or straight); others should look tidy if worn open-necked, on their own, or with the shirt collar outside the jacket. The basic requirement for an open-neck shirt to look tidy is that the collar can stand up and retain its shape without being buttoned up.

Look After Your Stage Clothes

A careful choice of the clothes you buy can often alleviate many of the maintenance problems you can have with stage clothes. If you are on the road, it can be very tricky if stage suits need pressing before every gig. If the suits are made of some sort of permanent-press material, they will look neater for much longer.

Drummers often sweat more than other musicians, and for that reason, it is a good idea to buy two shirts for yourself, even if everyone else only gets one. Bands who work continuously usually have a change of shirts. I always get two of each type, which results in more expense, but I think it is worthwhile. Being continually soaked in sweat and then washed means that the drummer's shirts are likely to wear out more quickly than those of other band members.

It is the responsibility of each member of the band to look after his or her stage clothes. This might seem obvious, but it goes deeper than you think. Clothing manufacturers discontinue lines with alarming regularity, so you cannot assume that you will be able to replace your stage gear when

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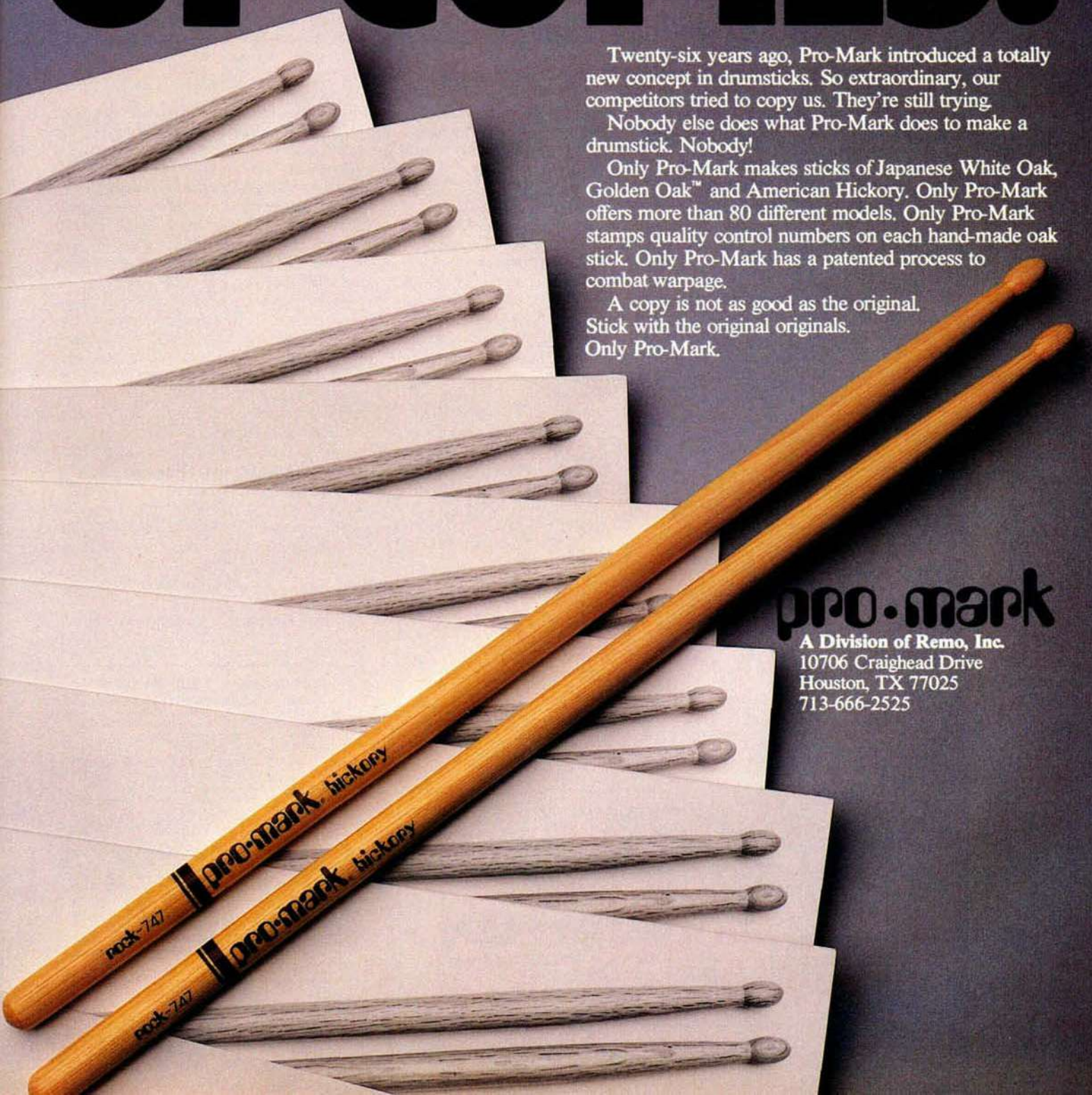

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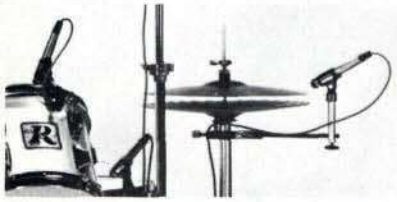

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it wears out. Even if you have made-to-measure clothes, you might not *be* lucky since the cloth might be discontinued. For this reason, it can happen that a whole band needs to buy new stage clothes because one member has allowed his to deteriorate.

Here are some simple rules for the preservation of stage clothes: Don't travel to gigs and set up equipment in them. By following this rule, you will reduce the amount of time that the clothes are actually being used, which will prolong their life. You will also avoid staining your clothes with grease from cars or drum hardware, and you will make a much more professional impression. For the same reasons, don't use pieces of your band uniform for everyday wear. Follow the washing instructions on the labels, and if one says "dry clean only," don't wash it. If you are on the road, you will be carrying some tools and spares for the maintenance of your set; it is also important to have a selection of suitable needles, cotton and thread for repairing your clothes.

Your Shoes

The feet are one of the most abused parts of the human anatomy. People have been in the habit of cramming their feet into the most unsuitable recepticles, purely in the name of fashion, and often against medical advice. Drummers tend to adopt the athlete's commonsense approach to footwear. The shoes must give support, freedom of movement, and above all comfort. A drummer's feet work hard; you don't want your shoes to become an obstacle to your playing. It is a very personal thing. I don't like slip-on shoes—they tend to slip off. Some drummers insist on soles which will give them a grip on the surface of the pedals; others want to be able to slide their feet on the pedals. Some drummers like playing in high-heeled boots; others find this an impossibility. I include myself in that latter group, but I do like ankle-length boots. The pair I use for "smart" gigs are 11 years old and irreplaceable. The boots in the shops today *all* seem to have high heels. The reason my boots have lasted 11 years is that I use them for playing and *nothing* else. The ideal pair of shoes is worth its weight in gold. Look after them as you do your favorite cymbal.

A Dress?

So when the phone rings and you start taking down the details of the gig you are being offered, remember to check what you are expected to wear, and whether the clothes are to be supplied by the band or by you. If you are told to wear what you like, make sure that you understand exactly what sort of venue you are going to. For instance, at a high-class hotel, it might be assumed that you will wear a suit. In that case, the "what you like" will only mean that no particular style or color is expected. On the other hand, if it is a beach party, you won't want to be overdressed.

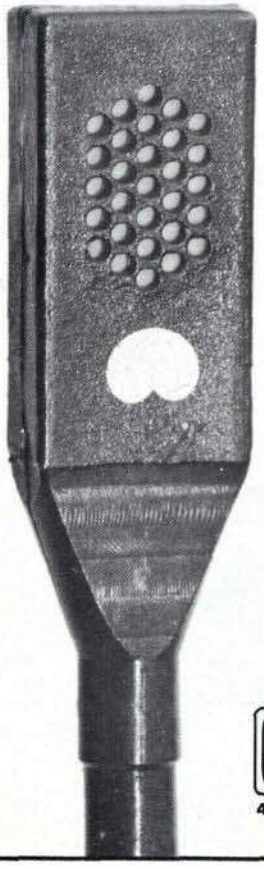
There are extreme cases when the clothes you are expected to wear can give you reasonable cause for turning down the gig. For example, I was once asked to sub in a band at a resort. After I had said that I could manage the time and place, the conversation continued rather like this:

Bandleader: Just one other thing. Tuesday night is drag night at the resort, and to get into the spirit of the thing, the band wears women's clothes.

Me: You're joking!—Aren't you?

Bandleader: No.

Me: You had better find another drummer then!



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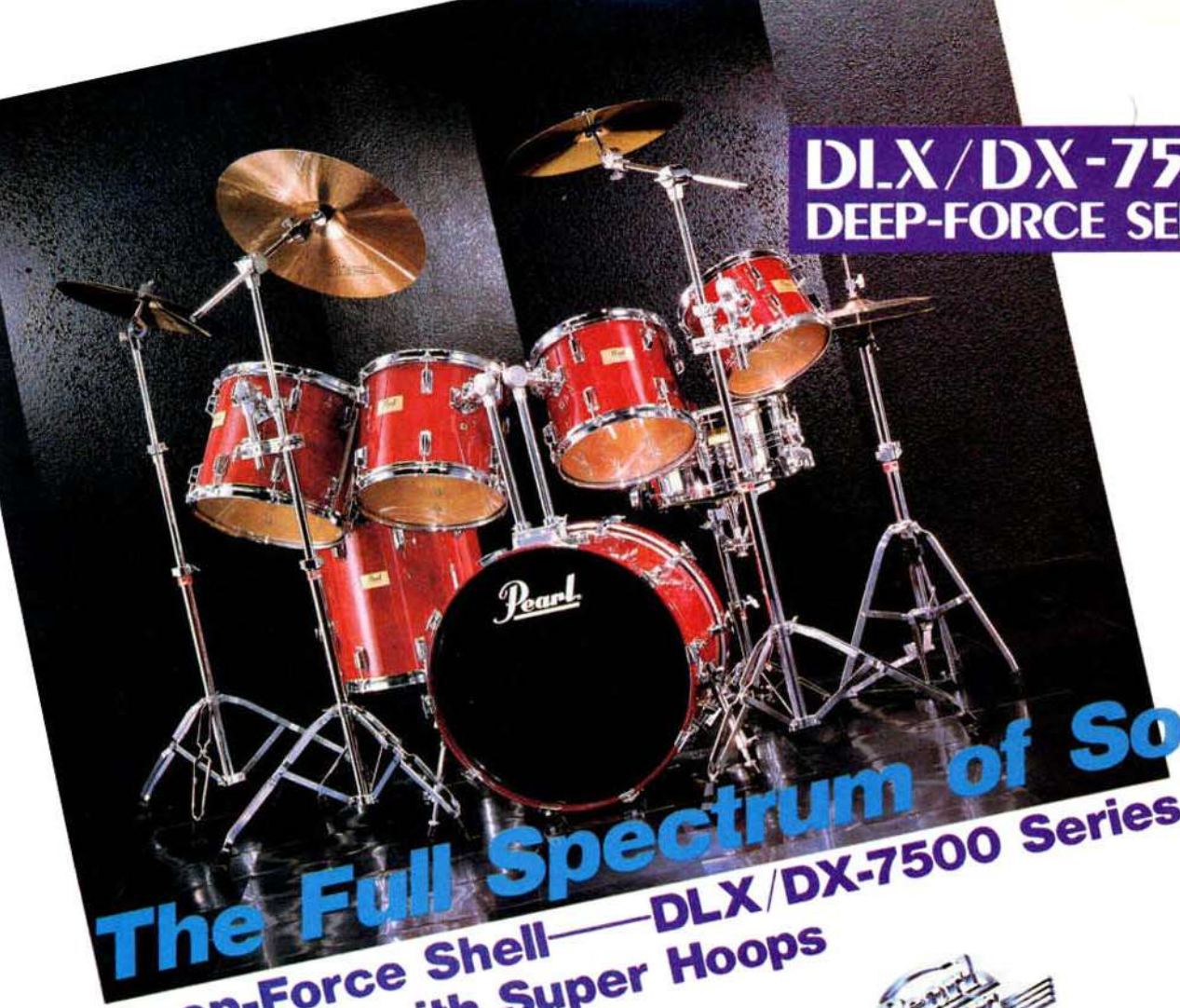

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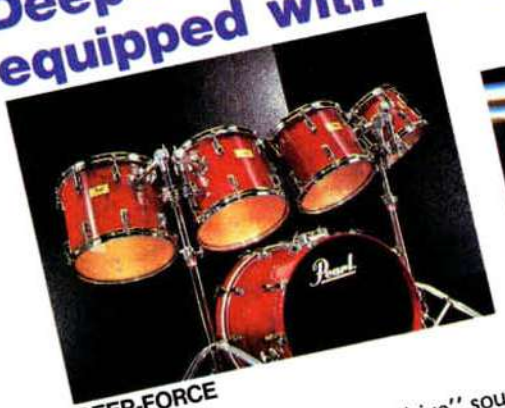

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ON TRACK

by Scott K. Fish & Rick Mattingly

STEVE SMITH— *Vital Information.* Columbia FCT-38955. Steve Smith: dr. T. Landers: bs. D. Wilczewski: reeds. M. Stern, D. Brown: gtr. *Looks Bad, Feels Good / Questionable / V.G. / Vital Information /All That Is / Stoughton To Stockholm Samba / 13th Month.*

If you're expecting this album to be Journey Junior, forget it! I could say this music is a blend of this and that style of music, but so what? It's creative improvisational music, and all instrumentals by a band of more than capable musicians. The liner notes say that Vital Information follows "somewhat in the path of Pat Metheny, Steps Ahead, Miles Davis and Weather Report." Perhaps the most important aspect of this venture is that it could very well help rock fans cross over into the jazz camp for some new listening, and vice versa. Smith's drumming covers a lot of territory between rock and jazz convincingly and most effectively. *SKF*

NANA **VASCONCELOS**— *Zumbi.* Europa JP 2013. Nana Vasconcelos: perc, vcls, body sounds. *Macacos "corpo" / Zumbi / Dida / Pregoes "rua" / Terreiro / Nos olhos de Petronila "ondas" / Passo / Chegada "corpo."*

Vasconcelos enjoys taking seemingly simple things and exploring them in new ways. This album finds him actually exploring himself!—the focus of the album is on sounds Nana makes with his voice and his body. Through overdubbing, he has combined a variety of percussion instruments—shakers, hand drums, bells (but curiously, no berimbau)—with a "chorus" of voices and body sounds, making this more than the typical solo album. This record is as unique as Vasconcelos himself. *RM*

BIG TWIST AND THE MELLOW FELLOWS—*Playing For Keeps.* Alligator AL-4732. "Big Twist" Nolan: vcl, harmonica. P. Special: gtr. T. Ogolini: tn sx. J. Exum: tbn. D. Tenuto, P. Howard: trp. S. Wingfield: kybd. T. West: bs. Willie Hayes: dr. S. Elsen: bar sx. *300 Pounds of Heavenly Joy / Flip Flop / I Want Your Love / Polk Salad Annie / Pouring Water On A Drowning Man / I Got A Problem / I Brought The Blues On Myself/ We're Gonna Make It Just One Woman.*

Another biting Alligator release. Big Twist and the Mellow Fellows are "a first rate, no-holds-barred Chicago rhythm and blues band in top form." Every track grooves and swings and the musicians are top notch. What comes through loud and clear is that this isn't a band playing *at* rhythm and blues; they must've been weaned on it! Drummer Willie Hayes is rock solid. This music reminds me of the better Stax sessions and the Butterfield horn bands in their heydey.SAF

ARCHIE ALLEYNE/ERANK WRIGHT QUARTET— *Up There.* From Bebop to Now Records BBN 1001. Archie Alleyne: dr. Frank Wright: vb. W. Downes: pno. S. Wallace: bs. *Up There / One Hundred Ways / Deja Vu / Clouds / Monk's Blues / I Didn't Know About You / Wright Or Ron / A.A. Eh / Everything Must Change.*

A relaxed mainstream session from Canada. Wright is a lyrical and melodic vibraphonist; Alleyne is solid and swings. The group plays good tunes, and plays them well. *RM*

IRV COTTLER—*I've Got You Under My Skins.* Project 3 PR5111. Irv Cottier: dr. C. Turner, J. Ferrante, J. Frosk, D. Perry: trp. B. Alexander, P. Faulise, S. Russo, J. Messner: trb. S. Cooper, A. Klink, W. Slapin, B. Steen, S. Schlinger: sx. G. Cherico, T. Mottola, B. Leighton: rhythm section. *The Lady Is A Tramp / I'll Never Smile Again / Witchcraft / Fly Me To The Moon / My Kind Of Town / I've Got You Under My Skin / All Or Nothing At All / This Love Of Mine / I Get A Kick Out Of You / New York, New York.*

Irv Cottier would be a good role-model for any aspiring big band drummer; he controls the band with solid timekeeping, sets up and accents the band figures with authority, and tempers it all with restraint and good taste. Cottier's approach is not chops oriented—he is the internal heartbeat rather than the flashy exterior. This album shows why Irv is the in-demand drummer he is (among other gigs, he's been Sinatra's drummer for the past 25 years). This is solid big band music, and should not be overlooked by fans of that idiom. *RM*

BUTCH MILES—*Hail To The Chief!* Famous Door HL 124. Butch Miles: dr, vcl. J. Anders: tn sx. G. Zottola: trp, flghn, al sx, tn sx. F. Green: gtr. F. Wess: tn sx. M. Markowitz: trp, flghn. J. Bunch: pno. M. Hinton: bs. *Topsy / Hail To The Chief / I Can't Believe / Afternoon Of Some Basie-ites / Medley: Don't Worry A bout Me, These Foolish Things, It Had To Be You / Boogie Woogie.*

The "chief" Butch is hailing is Count Basie, for whom he worked for four and a half years. But don't get the wrong idea—this is not a group trying to sound like Basie; this is simply a small group playing straight-ahead swing music. Miles has chosen to inspire the band through drive rather than chops, and his brushwork is notable. Swing lives! *RM*

continued on next page

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PHEEROAN AKLAFF—*Fits Like A Glove.* Gramavision GR-8207. Pheeroan akLaff: dr, vcl. M. Gregrory: ld. vcl, gtr. G. Allen: kybd. B. Eastmond: kybd. S. Banks, L. Hopper: bs. M. Salazar: perc. E. Cherry, B. Ross: gtr. A.C. Myers: kybd. C. Taylor: vcl. P. Williams-Duke: harp. T. Barker: mallets. D.D. Andrews: sx. B. Parris: steel dr. *Waiting For The Heartache / Fits Like A Glove / "L" / "Intuit."*

Pheeroan akLaff's recording/performing career has primarily been that of a jazz drummer. With this EP, Mr. akLaff is branching out into more of a pop vein. Hats off to Pheeroan for approaching this music with originality on drumset. *SKF*

CHARLIE SHOEMAKE SEXTET—*Cross Roads.* Discovery DS-878. Charlie Shoemake: vb. Paul Motian: dr. T. Harrell: tpt, fglhn. T. Flanagan: pno. P. Sprague: gtr. E. Schuller: bs. *Say It Isn't So / The Child In Me / Fleeting Resemblance / Cross Roads / Recondite / Dunbar's Pace / Christmas Bells.*

This is a spirited, straight-ahead session from a notable group of musicians led by Shoemake, who not only plays vibes, but also wrote three of the compositions. Paul Motian's playing is a nice feature of this disc; his own records tend to be more avant-garde, so it's nice to hear his mainstream side. *RM*

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IMPORTANT: Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number so that you can be notified that you've won! The winner will be announced in the May 1984 issue of Modern Drummer Magazine.

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by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

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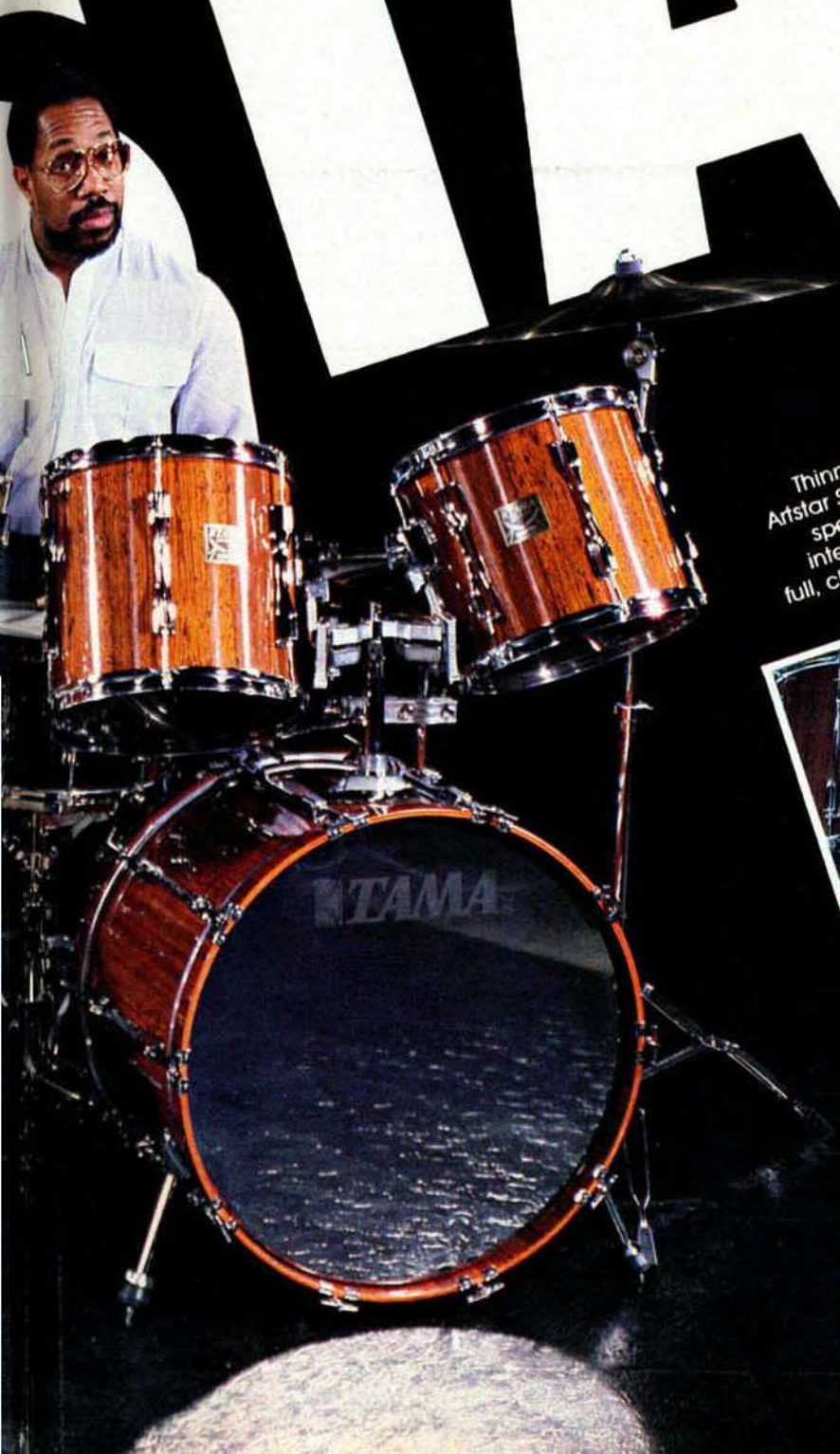

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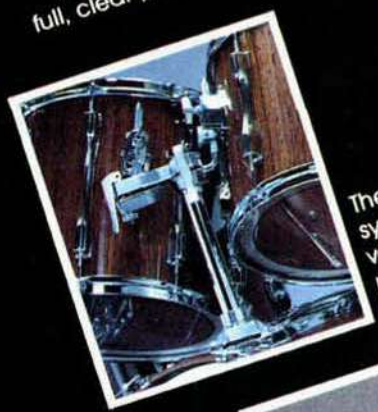

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by Rick Van Horn

Unlimiting Yourself

Drummers have their own tastes in music, and they enjoy listening to their favorite styles. It's not surprising that most musicians would, if given the choice, prefer to perform the music that they personally would like to hear. What I do find surprising is the number of "professional" players who are unwilling to play (and often incapable of playing) anything else. I find this attitude strange for a number of reasons—some very artsy and philosophical, and others very mundane and economical.

Dedication to one's art and specialization in one style of that art is fine, and can definitely lead to improving one's abilities. However, only the abilities relevant to that style will improve, while others will be sacrificed. What is achieved is a very limited expertise, rather than a versatile talent. And when it comes to economics, I find it incredible to hear of musicians turning down work because it isn't in their chosen field of endeavor. I can understand if it's a case of not being able to cut the gig. I personally wouldn't take a high-intensity fusion gig right now, because I've never performed in that style and would not be competent to fill the drum chair *right away.* But I'd never turn down the opportunity to join such a band if there were time enough to rehearse, and get the feel of the style and technique requirements. If a call came for something that I knew I could cut immediately and I needed the work, I would probably take it no matter what the style. Artistically, we all admire the artists who are well known for being able to "do anything." Economically, when it comes down to working in a style not of your particular choosing or not working at all, common sense would encourage the former choice.

Beyond the simple economics, there are advantages to working in various styles of music. You improve your own versatility by working in different areas. The more things you do, the more you'll be able to do in the future. There's a lot to be said for the confidence you can gain by getting a variety of musical experiences under your belt. That way, the next time a new challenge comes along, you'll feel better about taking it on.

A musical career is seldom linear in nature—that is, it doesn't proceed in a straight line. Very few major artists started out in one area and have never had to face the need to shift to some other style in order to keep working, at least temporarily. Everybody gets sidetracked for one reason or another, and most of the really good artists have turned this to their advantage, absorbing the new style and incorporating it into their own. Outside influences play a tremendous part in the creation of music. American "pop" music blends the contributions of rock, R&B, jazz, country and even classical, and each of those styles has its own individual roots. Contemporary rock alone is an incredible mixture of rockabilly, soul, funk, '60s British and '70s electronic music. Basically, what's happening in contemporary music is a combination of everything that has gone before, and so to have experience with several of those things can be of tremendous benefit to the contemporary musician.

I consider myself a "pop" drummer. I define that to mean: "I perform music in those styles that make up the contemporary mainstream of musical entertainment." Sounds a little highfalutin', doesn't it? It could be simplified to mean: "I play (and always have played) whatever anybody wants to hear at any given moment." This is what has kept me working for, lo, so many years. It also is what has given me whatever individual performing style and sound I have as a drummer. Everything one does leaves an impression of some kind on one's sense of musicality, and so the influences of all the different things I've done combine to make me play the way I do now. Just to use my own career as an example, let me give you an idea of how music can take you on a path of twists and turns.

I started out in a marching band, so my first musical influences were marches, and heavy snare drum technique. I stayed in that band for nine years, while playing in several teenage rock bands at the same time. Simultaneously, I had drumset lessons from a local jazz/big band drummer, so I developed under the combined influences of the Beatles, James Brown, the Beach Boys, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and John Phillip Sousa.

My first real pro gig was with a top-40 rock group, during late-'60s psychedelia. So I looked to Ginger Baker, Mitch Mitchell and Carmine Appice as my examples. However, shortly after that I went to a band playing early-'70s jazz-rock. Therefore, Chicago's Danny Seraphine and BS&T's Bobby Colomby, along with the drummers from the Sons of Champlin and Cold Blood, became my strongest influences. Next came a band heavily into guitar-oriented groups and long improvisations *(a la* Grateful Dead, early Doobie Brothers and Eric Clapton) but which featured, as a marketing sideline, a Hawaiian dance show! So I learned to play some Polynesian dance rhythms.

While I was going to college, I looked for some part-time playing to help finance my schooling. For a year and a half I was drumming in the house band at a Southern California resort, very much like those in the Catskills. I was playing with a group of musicians all old enough to be my father, and each week we backed up a different entertainer, in addition to playing all possible styles of old and new dance music. So here I was, coming from a background of top-40 rock groups, and now playing with a pianist, bassist, reed player and trumpet player, doing old standards and ballroom Latin music, singing Four Freshmen harmony lines, and reading show charts for the first time in my life. The last music of any kind I had to *read* was snare music in my marching days. Between the charts, the wide variety of styles and the stories of the older musicians, the education I got on that gig was something that money couldn't buy, and that I'll never forget.

When the resort closed down, I looked again for part-time work, and found it in a polka trio at a Polish restaurant. I must admit that I was hesitant to take what seemed to be an almost laughable gig. But it turned out to be one of the most enjoyable jobs of my entire career. I played with a reed player and an accordian virtuoso who also carried the bass. I learned immediately that polka music calls for uptempo, quick-sticking technique, with a lot of snare playing similar to march music, and lots of quick punches. We all sang in that group as well, and I even learned a little Polish on the side. My wrists and my finger technique improved dramatically over the six months or so that I played that gig, and I carry fond memories of it to this day.

Then I had the chance to go on the road with a traveling show group. This was the Bonnie & Clyde Show, featuring a four-piece band and two front entertainers. The band did three dance sets of top-40 music per night, in addition to the two shows with Bonnie & Clyde. Those shows called

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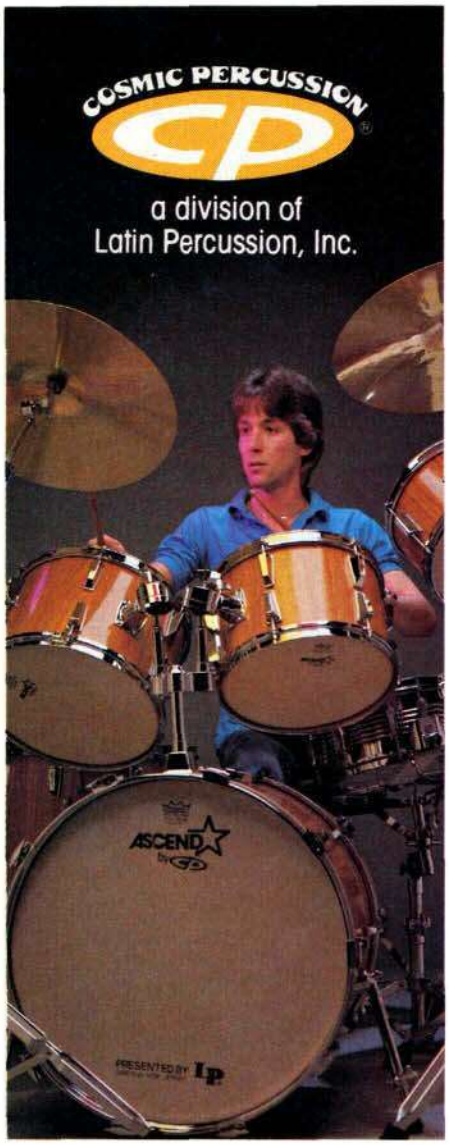

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for contemporary arrangements of '20s and '30s music, along with comedy dialogue, group vocals, and improvisation which included audience participation. It was very different from anything I had done before, and called for the creation of new abilities and techniques. I had to play well, maintain a character and accent, work within the framework of comedy timing, improvise well with dialogue in spontaneous situations, and keep the music solid and entertaining all the while.

After crisscrossing the country for ten months, I came home and did some freelancing, primarily with a fairly large, casual band doing weddings and large private functions. I was now drumming in a pop/big-band situation and driving a nine-piece group. We played top-40 horn-oriented tunes (Chicago, BS&T, Tower of Power), some of which were familiar to me from my previous jazz/rock band. We also played older big-band standards from the '40s, so my early drumset instruction and my time in the resort band helped me out there.

When I got another call to go on the road, the situation was dramatically different once again. I left the nine-piece group to play with a lounge trio (piano, bass and drums) touring the Pacific Northwest. Since we were still playing top-40 music but didn't have a lot of instrumentation, we relied on intricate arrangements, both musical and vocal, to keep us entertaining. This called for tasteful and innovative playing on my part, while doing a great many lead and background vocals.

After I left that group, I returned to a full-time version of the nine-piece horn band. This lasted for about a year, and then I was simply out of work. Times looked very tough until I got a call to audition for a country/western trio. This was a difficult decision for me. I don't particularly enjoy country music from a listening standpoint, and I had never played authentic country. But I needed work and had no doubts about my ability to cut the music, so I went to the audition and got the job. Once again, I learned a great deal about a field I had never even considered before. I learned about simplifying my playing and being mellow, while swinging a country tune that relies on a gentle but firm rhythm for its very existence. It was a real reversal, coming right from the driving drumming required in the larger group. So although I didn't stay long with the country band because of health problems, I did learn a meaningful and lasting lesson from the experience.

After free-lancing a bit more, I landed the drum seat with Summerwine, a very successful top-40 act playing the Black Angus chain in San Diego. This group had already been working steadily in the chain for three years when I joined them. Naturally, we were doing the current top-40 material, but because the Black Angus clientele included a very wide age group, and also because we featured a female vocalist of immense range and versatility, we did a wider variety of material than most strictly top-40 groups. We pulled out old torch songs from the '40s and '50s, along with Barbra Streisand material; we did country shuffles; we did Broadway tunes—all this in addition to whatever was popular at the moment. When disco was happening, we stressed the disco dance hits (for a while I thought I was becoming a Bee Gees clone); as disco faded and more and more straight rock was popular, we swung our emphasis that way. But we always continued the variety material as well, and I continued working with that group, six nights a week, for over four straight years until Summerwine retired in July of 1982. Had I been a straight rock drummer, or a straight disco drummer, or even just a top-40 drummer with no background in standards, country or variety music, I would not have been as successful with that group, and perhaps the group would not have been as successful either.

For the next six months I played with a rock 'n' roll revival act, doing the '50s and '60s material it had originally played when it was brand new, 15 to 20 years ago. That was a lark.

I'm currently on my most recent career shift, and that is Four Lane Hyway, a high-energy rock group. I'm now devoting my efforts to becoming as solid, driving and foundational as I possibly can for the benefit of the band, while still remaining musically interesting and innovative as an individual player. This is another new challenge for me, and I'm relishing every minute of it.

My purpose is not to glory in my own musical history, but to illustrate how the various opportunities for playing can combine to increase your musicianship, your versatility and your marketability. My advice to any young musician who comes to me and says, "I'm a very good rock drummer, but it's tough to find work right now. What should I do?" is "Become a very good country drummer, or funk drummer, or pop standards drummer, or ... or ... or all of the above." In other words, don't limit yourself to being a rock drummer; instead be a *musical* drummer. This opens you up to a wider market for work, and expands your horizons musically. The more you learn, the more you contribute to your personal creativity bank. The more you work, the more you are able to put *in* the bank.

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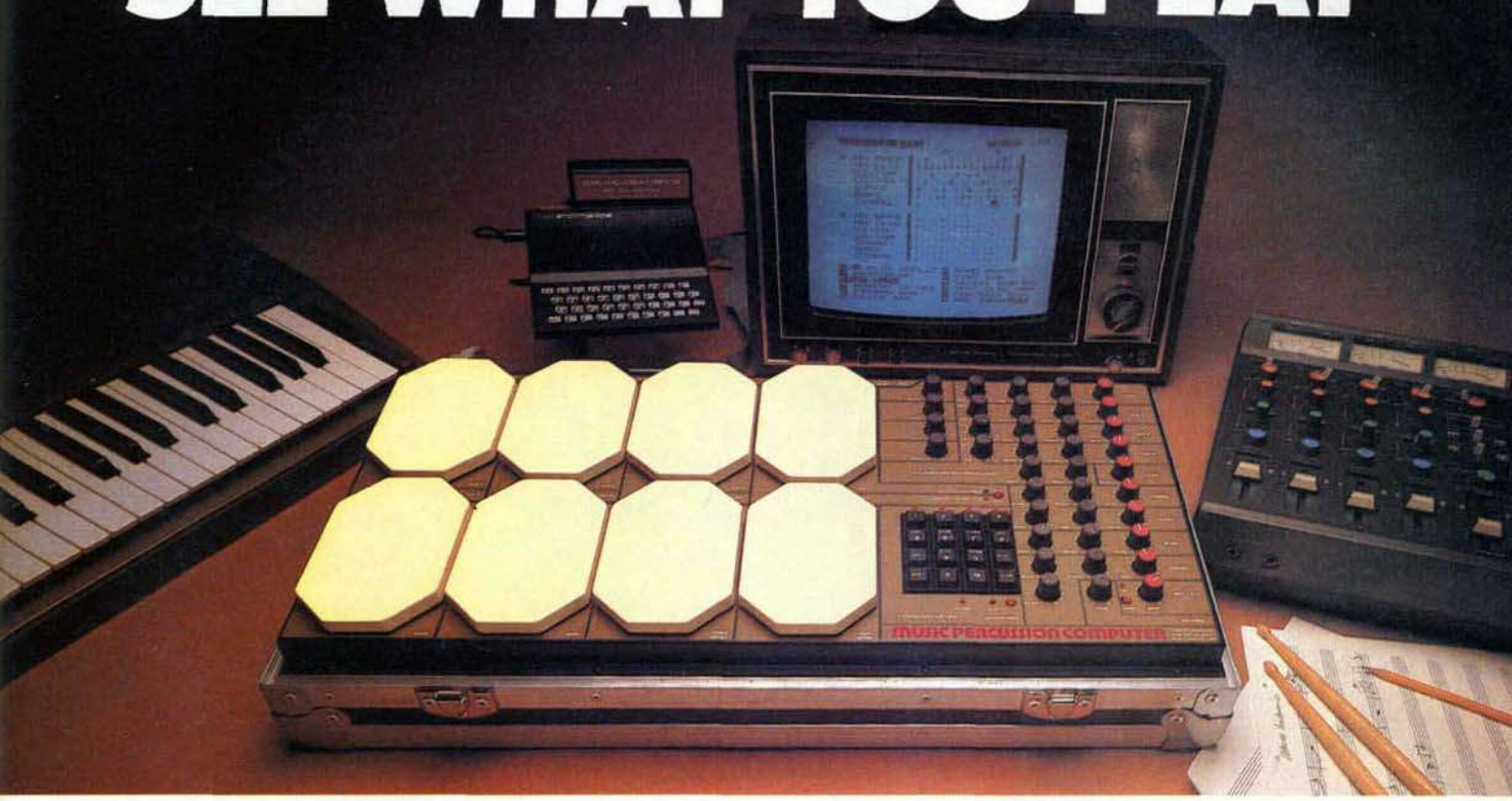

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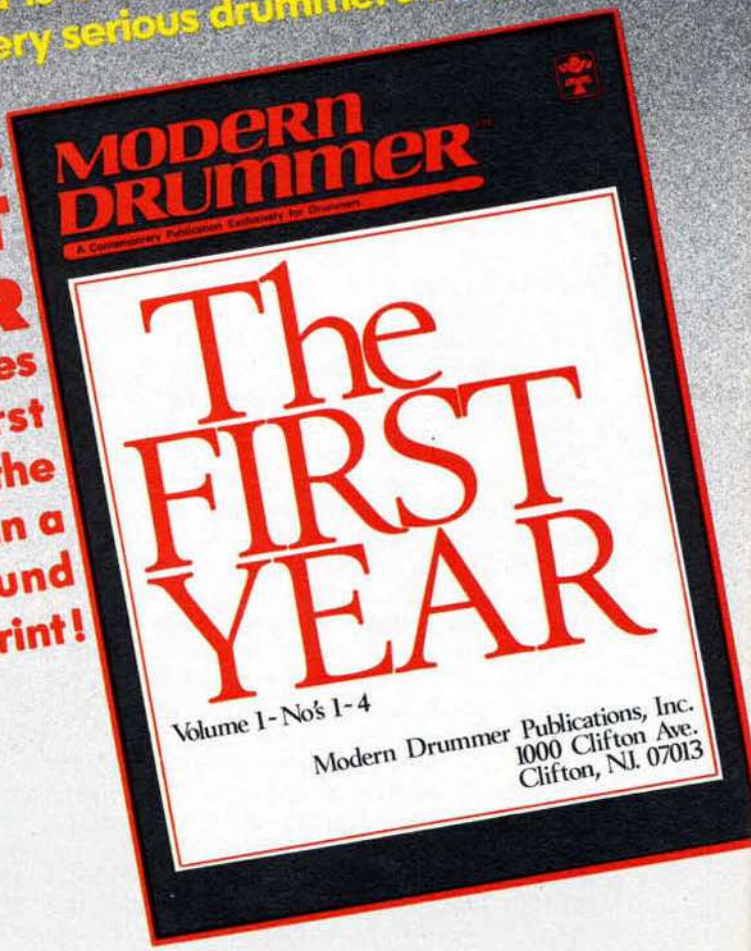

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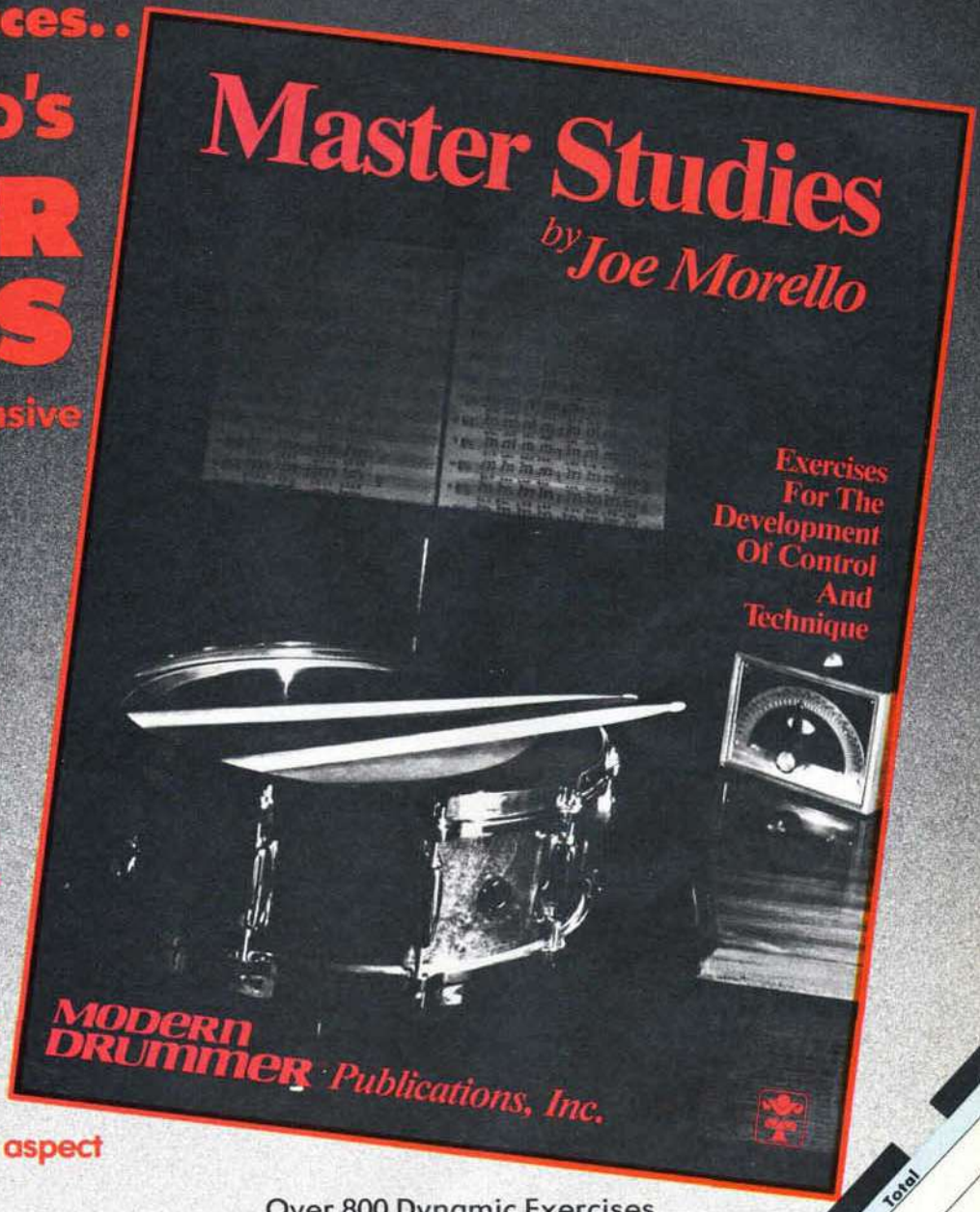

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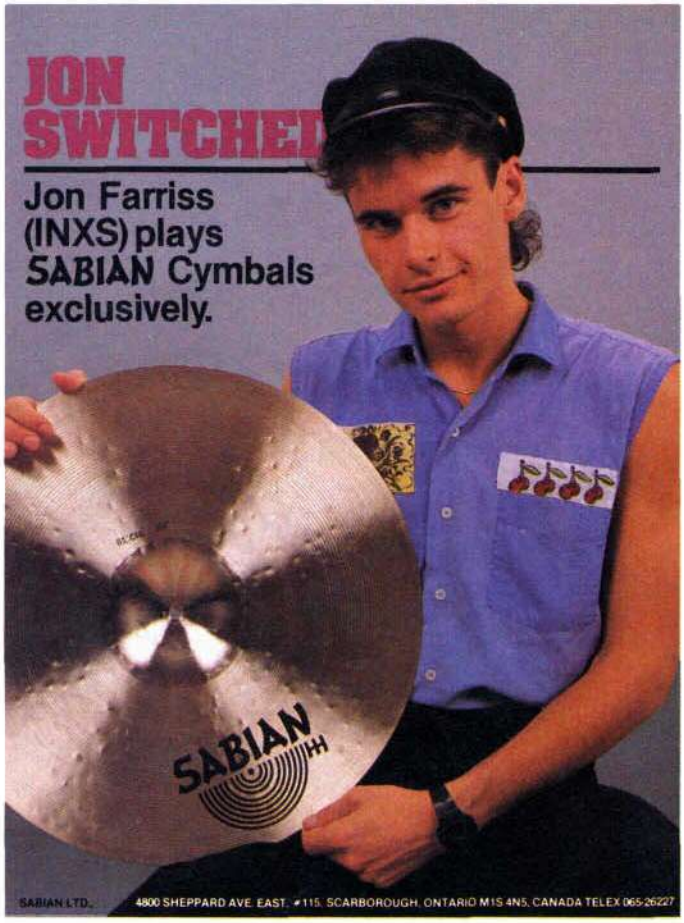

KUKE continued from page 17

to make it up. I also have a couple of overhead mic's so that you can get the ambience of the room on a track. You can use it at will. It helps to have the room sound. I mike above and below the snare to get a full sound. And obviously I used mic's on the two toms, one in front of the bass drum and one on the hi-hat.

SG: How do you tune and mike your drums for the studio?

SK: I tune them pretty low. The top head is always slightly looser than the bottom to get the sort of 'ba-doong" sound. I'm a great fan of Russ Kunkel. I think James Taylor has used him for just about everything. There's a lovely tom-tom sound on that track "Fire and Rain."

I have gaffer's tape that I use a little bit on the snare. But I like to keep a nice, live sound. I don't use too much muffling because it affects the bounce and the response.

SG: Didn't Bad Company and Led Zeppelin both use Eddie Kramer as an engineer?

SK: Oh yeah. I think Eddie Kramer did the first two albums. One interesting thing that Eddie did with Zeppelin was record in a place called Hedly Grange, which is an old manor house. They had a free week, and Bad Company went down there and recorded the first album in the time that Zeppelin had vacated. I had the drums in an old stone kitchen, and I think Boz was in the boiler house. Paul did a lot of the vocals out on the lawn at night. The drums sounded really live because of all the hard surfaces. I was pretty pleased with the drum sound.

SG: Did you and John Bonham ever discuss recording techniques or drumming concepts?

SK: Yes. John and I were great friends. We earnestly played together. On Zeppelin's last tour in 1980 in Europe, I went over to see them in Berlin, and John wanted me to do "Whole Lotta Love." We got a drumkit from a local store in Berlin and I did that song with John. It was about the heaviest thing I've ever heard in my life. It was like thunder. We exchanged licks and he let me take over, and then I let him take over. It was a most exhilarating experience.

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SG: How do you mike your kit on stage?
SK: On stage I mike the snare top and bottom. I never take the front head off the bass drum, so what I do is cut a small hole about 2" in diameter and put a little Shure mic' about two inches inside the drum. I mike the toms from above, and I have two ambience mic's about three feet above my head to pick up the cymbals. The hi-hat, being very important, has its own mic'.
SG: What about monitoring?
SK: I have one monitor behind me, mainly to hear the rest of the band. I don't have much of myself coming through. I find that you tend to get rather lazy if you hear yourself really well. If you don't hear yourself so well, you put more into your playing.
SG: Do you have any preference for heads?
SK: Mostly the Remo black dots. In fact, recently they have been making them with the dot on the underside, which is great. I don't like the very heavy heads; I find them too dead. They don't suit my playing. On the other hand, with the thin ones like the Remo *Diplomat,* you can get a good sound, but with my playing I would be through them in no time. Any good-quality head should sound good on a drum if you tune it properly, but Remos with the dots suit me best.
SG: Just to round off the discussion about gear, could you tell us about your cymbals?
SK: Well, I am endorsed by Paiste, and I must say that they are very good. I like them a lot. I do have a favorite crash cymbal, which is a 16" Zildjian—sorry Paiste!—but I don't use it on stage anymore. Unfortunately, there is a small split in it. I use 2002 15" *Sound Edge* hi-hat cymbals, a 16" crash on the left, an 18" ride, and a special 16" crash on the right—it's got a very high sound.
SG: An 18" ride?
SK: Yes. That is all I use. No big Chinese cymbals. I think those upturned cymbals are horrible; ghastly!
SG: I had trouble getting an 18" ride recently. I was told that nobody uses them, so there is no demand and nobody stocks them.
SK: Mine has got a lovely piercing sound on the bell. I don't need a lot of cymbals; good hi-hats, good crash, good ride—that's all. The sticks I use are Foote's *C.*
SG: Oh yes, the old favorites. I notice that you are taking part in a clinic for Paiste at the International Music Show.
SK: I was invited to a clinic in March, and Ian Paice, Mick Underwood and Rat Scabies were playing. I was quite impressed, and thought that I wouldn't mind doing one. So when Paiste asked me I said, "Yes." I've never done a clinic before so I await this one with "eager trepidation," you might say.
SG: Have you got a format worked out for this?
SK: No, I haven't. I will probably rely on the solo I did on the Bad Company tour. As I said, it is a rhythm thing. I start with a pattern on the bass drum and work from that. I'll make sure to bring in lots of cymbals, of course, as it is a Paiste thing.

I'm very interested. I've been practicing my press rolls and single strokes. I will try to impress on the audience that cymbals are instruments, not just things to bash. Well, I suppose heavy metal players use them like that; it depends on the style of music. People in combos will use them to bring out the delicate nuances which good songs should have.
SG: Coming back to the subject of Bad Company, that band wasn't really an extension of Free. I don't like getting involved in musical definitions, but there seemed to be an American "country" influence creeping in.
SK: Yes, I'll go along with that. When Free first toured in America, it was with Delaney & Bonnie, and Blind Faith. I got into the country rock at that time, especially Jim Keltner. When Bad Company formed it was a very mature band. It consisted of four very seasoned professionals; relatively young, early 20's, but very mature. We were very hard, but I like to think very musical as well. I can't stress that too much! "Tastefully heavy"—that's the way I like to think of it.
SG: Comparing the first Bad Company album with the first Free album, *Tons of Sobs,* the maturing process is most noticeable.

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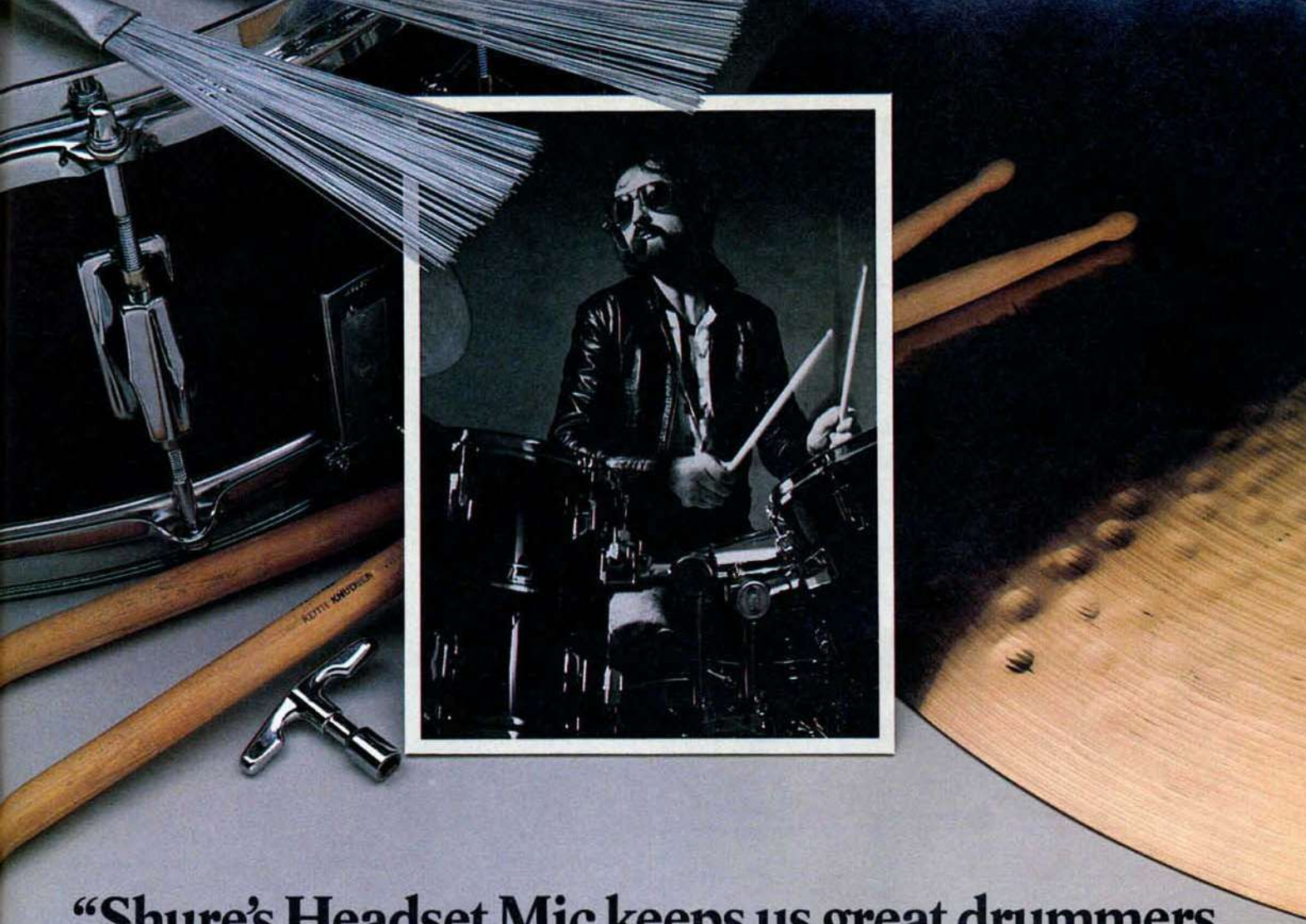
SK: *Tons of Sobs* was brash; the playing wasn't that good, but it was embryonic. There were bags of enthusiasm. Anyway, what do you expect from a bunch of 17-year-olds?
SG: Were you all as young as that?
SK: Yes, we were all 17 when the record was made, apart from Andy, who was only 16. He had been with Mayall when he was 15! Free was a very young band. So by the time Bad Company came around, the sound was different. It was more commercial in a way. It certainly took off in a big way.
SG: The success of Bad Company had an effect on the music scene. You are an influential band.
SK: You are trying to make me sound big headed now. I didn't want to do that. But . . . Okay, yes. Bad Company has had a very big influence. I believe that we have had some influence on many of the major heavy bands in the States at the moment, like Journey, Rush, Boston, Styx and Foreigner.
SG: Artimus Pyle said in an interview that, in the days of Lynyrd Skynyrd, Ronnie Van Zant and Tom Dowd used to hold up your playing to Artimus as an example to follow.
SK: I got to know them very well in the early days before they had that tragic plane crash. I got to know Artimus, and I think that Paul got put in prison with them one night, over here. They all went out drinking together. These things happen. [Laughs]
SG: You've spoken openly about some difficulty with alcohol. Why do you think you'd work hard at mastering a craft, attain a level of success and then slip into self-destruct?
SK: I know what you mean. Rock 'n' roll is the worst for that; there are so many temptations. The people you mix with, or the people who are on the periphery of the musicians, can be dangerous. It's dangerous to get big headed. You tend to think that you can do more than you actually can, whether it's drinking too much or whatever. You have to watch it. It's very important to have good people around you to say, "Hey man, take it easy. You're getting a bit off line." It's good to have mates around.
SG: You didn't have that association for a while?



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SK: No. I didn't really need it because . . . it's hard to say. I don't know why people do that. Some people just seemed destined to go down that road. Yes, I did have a drinking problem. I still overdo it now and again. But I have a very good wife who's been really good to me. She basically straightened me out. I also have two kids and they straightened me out a lot! When you're 21 or 22, you can carouse, stay up all night or drink a whole bottle of Scotch. You don't have the responsibilities. But, when you get married and have kids, then that really all goes out of the window. You can't stay up all night because the baby's got to be fed at 5:00 in the morning.

SG: How do you feel about being used as a model for other drummers?

SK: Flattered; very flattered. It makes me feel great. It's marvelous. When I was learning, I tried to sound like Al Jackson, or Jim Capaldi, who's a very good buddy of mine. I remember once I was just practicing, waiting for the rest of the band to arrive for a Free session, and Andy Johns, a very good engineer came in and said, "I really thought that was Jim Capaldi playing." I was on cloud nine for days because I really loved Jim's playing.

SG: Do you do many sessions for other people?

SK: I did some in the early days, like with Champion Jack Dupre, for instance, while I was in Free. More up to date? I have done some tracks with Jon Lord and Jimmy Page.

SG: Didn't you record with John Wetton?

SK: Yes, I did John Wetton's solo album in 1980. Now that he is with Asia they will probably re-release that one. I don't really do that many sessions unless it is for friends. That's just the way I am. However, now that I am not as busy as I was, I would enjoy doing some sessions.

SG: Why aren't you as busy as you were?

SK: When you get to be a certain age, you don't want to work as much. Three of us in the band are now family men—married with children. So we don't feel like touring as much as we used to.

SG: What about new Bad Company albums?

SK: It happens once in a blue moon. We don't record as much as we used to either. All the lads are interested in other things. We are all doing solo albums. Mick Ralphs has got one coming out called *Take This*—better give him a plug. I'm involved in a new band called Wildlife. We've made an album and we're going on the road. So, Bad Company hasn't broken up; we're just not working as much.

SG: Are you the leader of Wildlife?

SK: Yes, I suppose I am cast in the role of leader. The other guys are not as well known as I am. In fact, they are not known at all.

SG: Is this band similar to Bad Company?

SK: Yes, it is similar. I'm the drummer in both bands; that could have something to do with it. It's a young band.

SG: I notice that you occasionally get writing credits. What is your particular contribution when you collaborate with Paul Rodgers? Does one of you write the music and the other the lyrics?

SK: I'm not all that hot on lyrics; I write mainly music. I play piano and guitar, so I can do that. I wrote "Bad Company" with Paul. I did the chords and a couple of lines, and he did the rest. It was a collaboration. On the *Rough Diamonds* album there is a track called "Untie the Knot." I wrote the music and he wrote the words. We have recorded songs which I have written entirely, but I'm not a prolific writer. I'd like to be, but the ideas only come now and again.

SG: "Untie the Knot" seems to be more soul oriented than the rest of the material.

SK: Yes, I like soul; all the old Tamla and Stax stuff. This one sounds rather like an Isley Brothers song, I suppose.

SG: You are a drummer who has been copied. Is there any advice you could give to developing drummers?

SK: I don't do many fills, but when I do one, I make sure that it's tasteful. I also make sure that everyone hears it.

SG: I noticed that even in the early days with Free you were making your fills more imaginative than many other people were at the time. You used to do things like coming off on the fourth beat of

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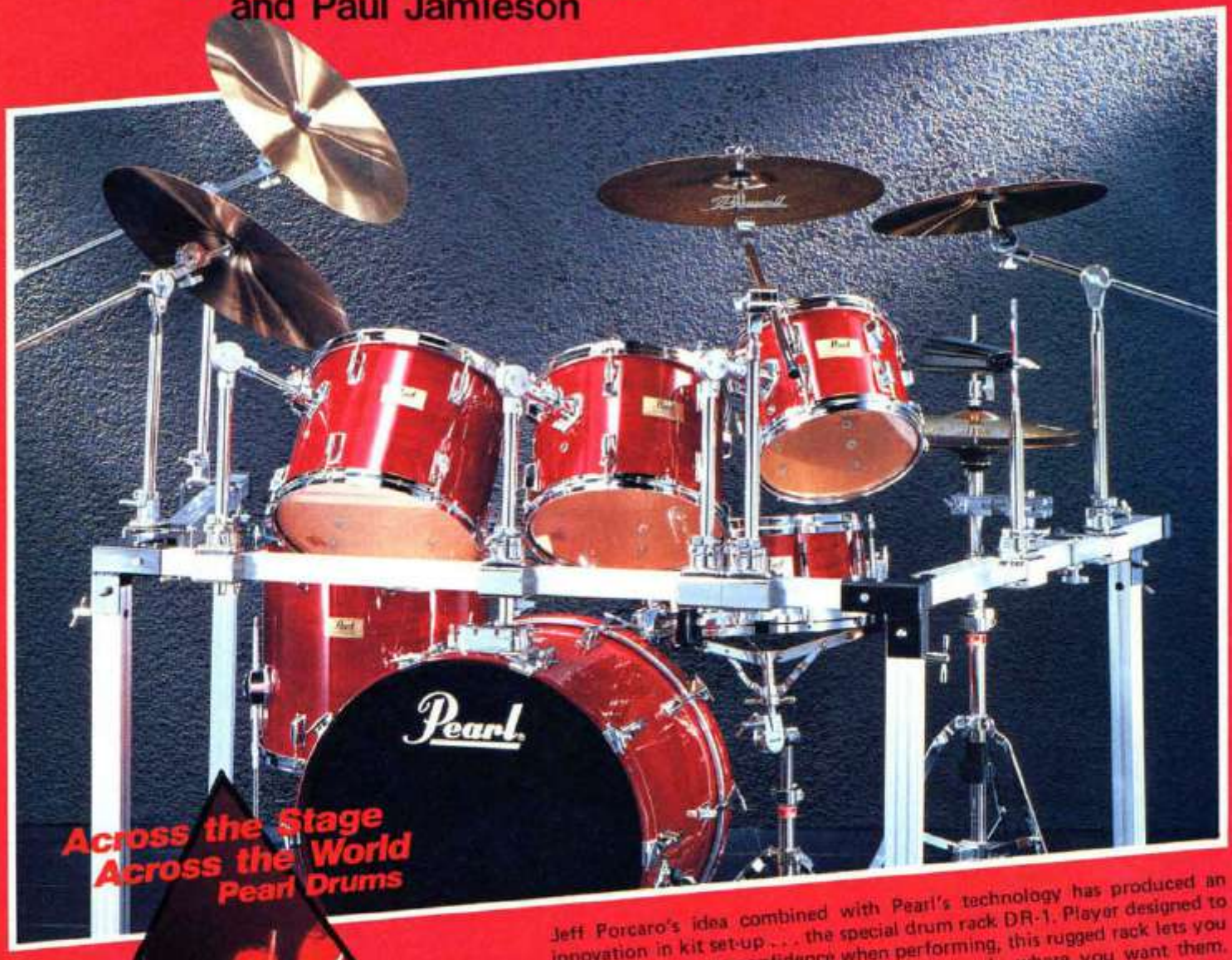

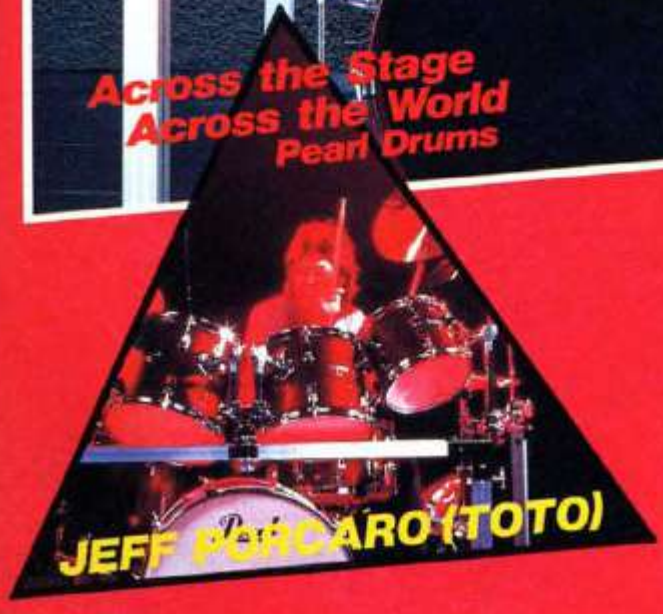

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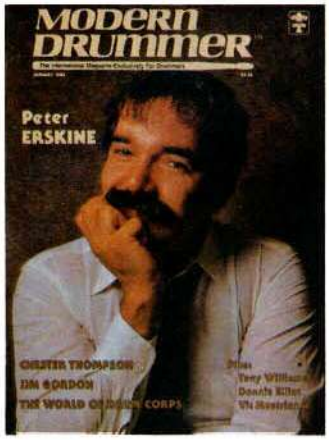

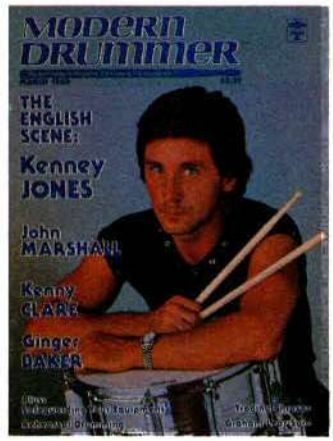

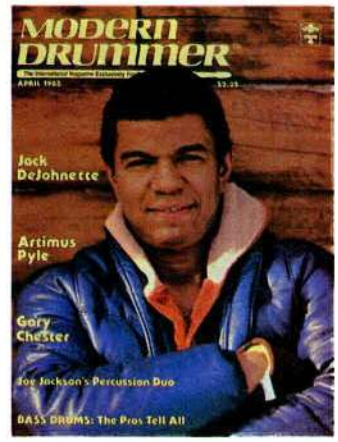

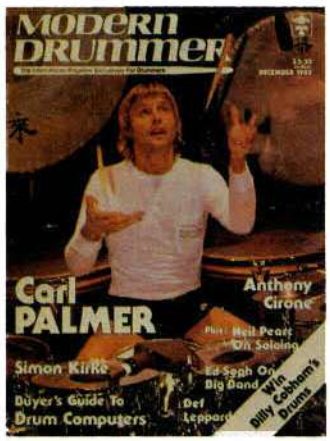

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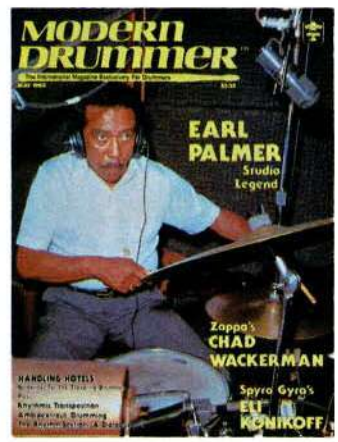

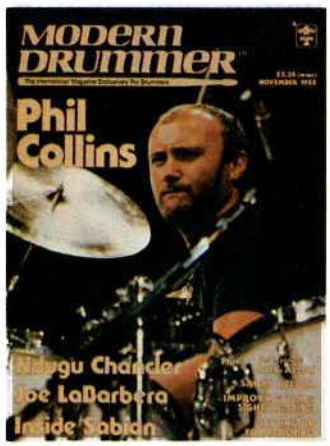

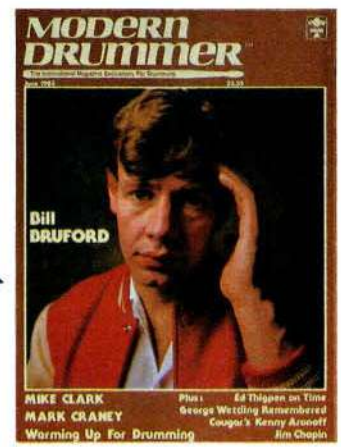

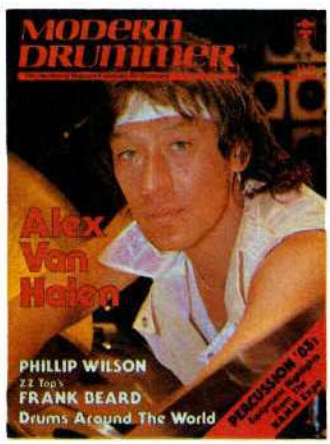

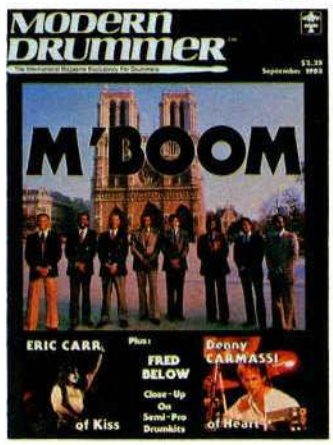

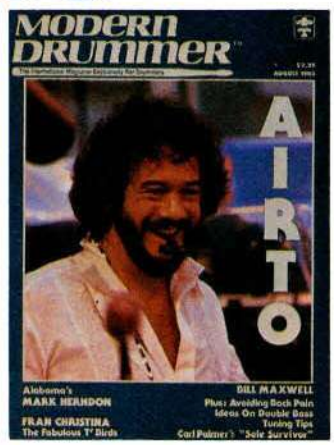

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the bar rather than running through to the first beat of the following bar.

SK: I have to give credit to Al Jackson and his playing on *Hot Buttered Soul,* an Isaac Hayes record from 1969. I would advise *any* drummer to go out and get that album, because you can hear the super playing of Al Jackson. There is a track which lasts about 15 minutes, and it builds in intensity. All Al Jackson is doing is 8ths on the hi-hat, *four* on the snare, and then he does doubles on the bass drum. The power and the sheer intensity towards the end is phenomenal. And I must admit it was that intensity that I copied. It seems to me that the kit almost takes off. Great! Depending on the song, of course; if it's a quiet song, that doesn't apply. But for a really heavy song, that was a marvelous thing he did. Al Jackson—a great drummer!

SG: There is more to playing with intensity than using a lot of volume.

SK: Yes. Here's a word of advice: Drummers, when they get into big halls, tend to play very, very hard. Don't! If you feel you are being drowned out by other members of the band, don't play louder. You'll only make it worse because you start a competition. The best thing is to throttle back. If you are playing so hard that you are getting out of breath and thinking, "How am I going to make it through this gig?" you are doing it all wrong. Try taking ten deep breaths and just play comfortably. Make all the lads come down to your level. The drummer is the anchor, and if you are trying to overreach yourself, it is going to sound like a mess. If you are exhausted, you are not of much use. So don't overexert yourself too much. Play hard, but don't overdo it. Don't be scared of big halls; just keep hitting those drums dead center and you will be alright.

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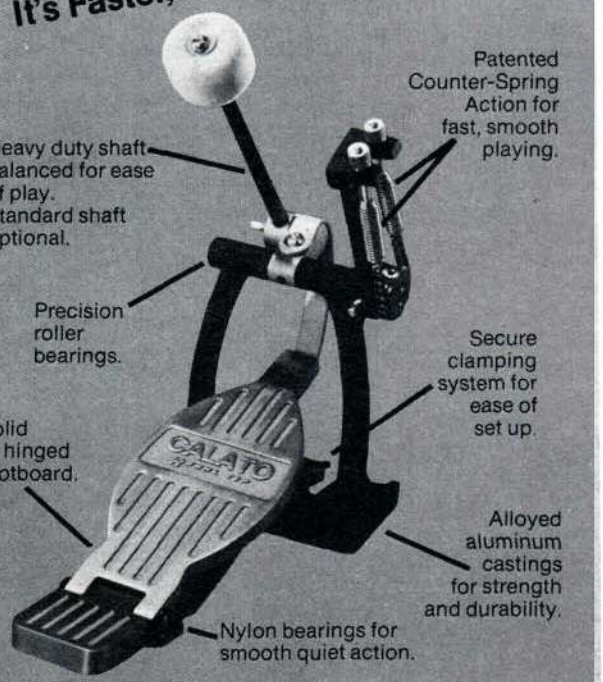

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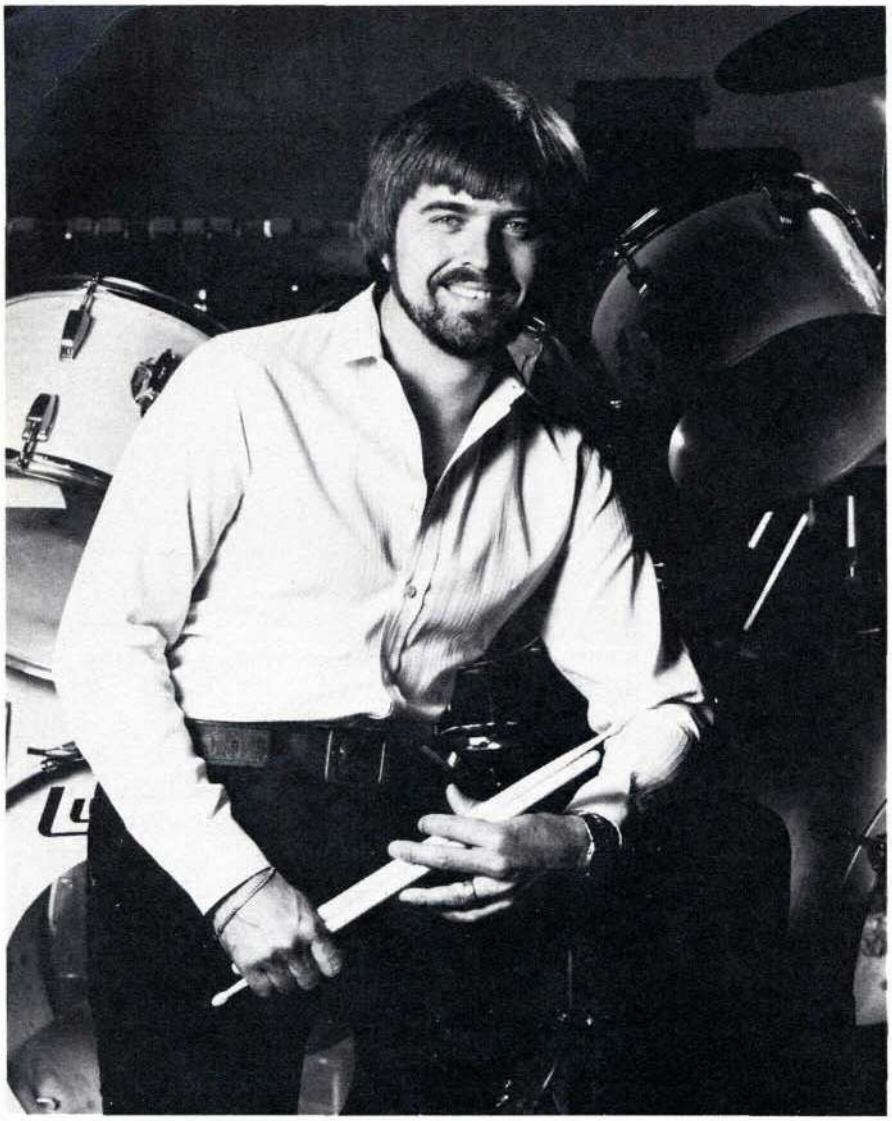
Cubby



The fact that show drummers receive comparatively little recognition is an enigma to me considering that they are some of the hardest working musicians. Their ability to play a variety of styles must be masterful; their sense of theatrics and dynamics must be total. Cubby O'Brien is one such accomplished musician. Listening to a sampling of his work is indeed impressive, for he covers the span from a huge 1940s production with Juliet Prowse to the more sedate music of Andy Williams.

Working a show from the ground up often entails rigorous rehearsals with the star, the choreographer, a rehearsal pianist and dancers. Working with a choreographer is an art in itself, and one in which Cubby specializes.

"Working with dancers is a totally different thing from working with musicians. Choreographers don't count things in fours. A choreographer who thinks of a movement to get from A to B which takes seven counts doesn't care if it works musically or not. He wants seven counts from A to B. It's up to us to make those seven counts musical so that when you give it to the arranger, or when you get the final product, it doesn't sound like seven counts, but it sounds musical. Sometimes it's not easy to do that, but it can be done. If you're in 4/4 and the normal accents would be on "2" and "4" and the choreographer has got it somewhere else, sometimes you can put the accents somewhere else and still hit "2" and "4". The choreographer still gets those accents, but in a different way. However, if it just isn't going to work, you can usually convince the choreographer that it's not going to sound right. That's why the rehearsal pianist and the drummer are there, because we can show the choreographer what it's going to sound like. You have to be a little bit of a psychologist when working with choreographers because they're very emotional people. They're usually under a tremendous strain, time-wise. You have a whole room of 50 dancers sitting around making X amount of dollars an hour and budgets are going sky high, so you're under a tremendous amount of pressure to get things done and get it to the arranger. There are 18-million bars of music, copyists going crazy trying to get things done, people dropping in and out, and the stars are saying, 'I can't make it today; I don't feel good today . . . ' But it's a fun part of the business that a lot of drummers don't like. I really like it because it gives me a chance to be pretty creative. I can actually have a lot to say about what the arrangement is going to be, where the accents are going to be, and what the accents should be. A lot of times, the pianist and I will decide that these should be trumpet accents, or this should be woodwinds, or this should be percussion, so we're actually laying out the arrangement. By the time we give it to the arranger, he follows our sketch pretty closely because that's what the choreographer wants to hear. We usually make a tape in which the pianist and I will play the whole thing down with all the accents in it, and then we both submit our detailed piano and drum sketches. The pianist will have everything down there, including woodwind lines or trumpet lines and I'll have all the drum accents, all the big band accents, and everything that should be there. Then it's up to the arranger to figure out how to make it work.

"There's an African number with Juliet Prowse that took hours and hours of planning. The choreographer, myself, the piano player, Juliet and the dancers went into the studio and it took hours of working these moves out. If Juliet is doing lifts with a guy, and she's being thrown around over this guy's shoulders and all over the place, we have to figure out musically how to accent those moves at exactly the right times every night. It takes timing for those bars and those counts to come out that way every night. We're behind a screen and don't even see what's going on out front. I have a T.V. monitor and can see her, but the rest of the orchestra can't. They're totally blind, so those moves have to be worked out perfectly.

"It's an amazing amount of work putting a show together. After I did the Acad-

O'Brien

by Robyn Flans

emy Awards, I went to San Francisco where we did two shows with Bernadette Peters, and it was like a vacation. I had been working 12 hours a day on the Academy Awards, with no days off for six weeks. There are tons of music in those big dance numbers, and all that has to be set, choreographed and arranged. Then going with Bernadette was like a vacation just to play in a band again. I like doing a lot of different things. I like working with the choreographer and the piano player, and doing that creative thing for a while, but then I miss playing in a band, so it's a kick for me to get out and do Andy's show with a band and string section again. Recently we did two symphony dates, which was different from the trip we took to Australia in the summer. That was more of a jazz band thing. Then I'm doing the Chaplin thing [Anthony Newley's theatrical production of *Charlie Chaplin]* which is rehearsal drums again. I just like doing different things. My career has been that way. I don't consider myself a jazz player or a show player. I'll do a Bar Mitzvah if I like the people who are playing. I don't care. It's fun."

And it's been fun since day one. Most people remember Cubby O'Brien from his auspicious debut with the *Mickey Mouse Club.* Born in 1946, the youngest of three sons, five-year-old Carl began taking drum lessons from his father. Cubby would come home from the kindergarten across the street every day for lunch, spend a half hour eating, and the remaining time was spent learning the instrument. After four years of study and playing in a junior Dixieland band around the San Francisco Valley, it was no surprise that he was fully prepared to land the gig on the historical *Mickey Mouse Club.* He immediately began to take vocal and dance lessons in addition to the continuous drum lessons with his dad, and later with Jack Sperling and Murray Spivak.

"I mainly went to Jack because I wanted to be a big band studio drummer. I had been sitting around NBC watching Jack play big band drums on *the Andy Williams Show* and all the shows he did there. He taught me some things about playing in big bands and reading and how important it was to read, but he also said something that was very interesting: 'There are only so many figures that an arranger can write in a big band, so you don't really have to be a concert, classical reader to play in a big band.' I took lessons from Jack for about six months and one night he called my dad and said, 'Look, you're wasting your money. Don't send him here anymore. I can't show him anything else,' which was really a tremendous compliment. So I went to Murray because I had been talking to Louie Bellson, who was one of Murray's students too. I learned the finger thing and Murray's style and I use a combination of wrist and fingers—and elbows and whatever else," he laughs.

When the filming of the *Mickey Mouse Club* ended after four years, due to exorbitant production costs, Cubby almost immediately landed a position with one of Lawrence Welk's two shows. On the Wednesday night show, Welk had instituted a junior 12-piece band for which O'Brien played drums. He also sang duets with the youngest Lennon Sister, Janet. After the junior band fizzled, Cubby was moved to the Saturday night show. He continued to play drums in the big band in specialty numbers and whatever else.

"It was show-biz time for a couple of years," he smiles. "One night I'd conduct the orchestra; another night I'd play a bongo solo, I'd sing with Janet and I'd tap dance."

During junior high, Cubby continued to play, act and do commercials. In his senior year of high school, he traveled with Spike Jones for the last two years of Jones' life, doing school work by day and sending it back to the professional school in which he was enrolled, while performing three shows each night.

"I learned a lot from Spike. He loved show business. I had this big drum number in the show with the sticks and the black light. I was sitting high on a riser and he would sit down below me, and every night he would turn around and watch this drum solo—every night! He just loved drummers."

The drummers Cubby loved from the beginning were Buddy Rich, for his soloing prowess, and Louie Bellson, who along with Jack Sperling influenced Cubby's use of double bass drums from the very beginning. He endorses Ludwig and possesses two sets from which he interchanges drums to suit a gig's specific requirements.

"I was reading Steve Gadd's article about how he never went into the job trying to become a star or personality, but always went in trying to please the person he was working with and trying to play the music that was required. So if you're working with a dancer like Juliet Prowse, who has eleven dancers, it's a big cast and a big show and a lot of percussion, so there are certain things that you need. I use Syndrums, because I have them set for some African sounds, and I use the double bass drums and all the concert toms. There are a lot of drums in that show. Working with a dancer is totally different from working with an Andy Williams. There's a basic concept for an act when you get started and you basically know what you're going to try to do, like we knew there was going to be a 14-to 16-minute African suite number. Another number we do is a big 1940s number, so I know we're going to be playing Gene Krupa tom-toms. It's kind of like being an impressionist. If you really listen closely, an impressionist doesn't really sound like the people he's doing, he's just giving you enough of a leaning in that direction so if you hear it, it sounds like, say, Jimmy Stewart. If the concert toms are put in the right context, my big tom sounds just like Gene Krupa's. If you play it that way, it will give you the idea of that era. It's a suggestion of the feeling. You can get a rock sound out of that same drum.

continued on next page

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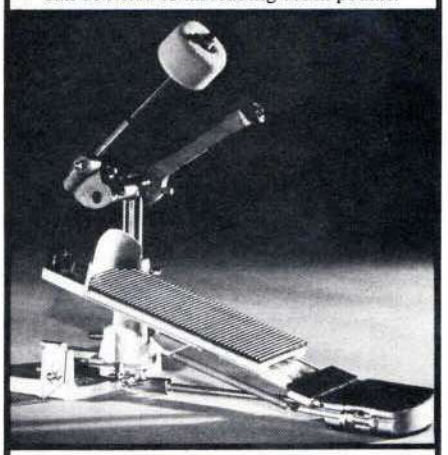

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"With a singer, it's a little different. Singers are tricky. Working with a singer is more subtle because the voice is right out in front and that person is really exposed, so it's really more of a matter of taste. I can cut my drumset way back with Andy. I'll just use the regular basic two little toms, a floor tom, a snare drum, three cymbals, and a hi-hat, and there's more brush work involved. There are more ballads and it's a little more tasteful. It's a totally different thing, but again, that's what I enjoy most—playing different styles. I think it keeps music fresh for me.

"The drums are such an important part of every band. There is usually only one drummer in a band and that's who sets the feeling for the whole evening. I watch the conductor just for downbeats. I don't mean to say I don't follow the conductor, but I know what the tempos are and when Andy's conductor gives the downbeats, I set the tempos and the band goes with me. If I want to push it a little bit, they'd better come with me. If Andy feels like singing something a little bit slower, I can feel it. I've got my monitor back there and he does that. Bernadette also does that—changes the times and tempos. So you have a lot of things to control, and you have to lead the band in the right direction."

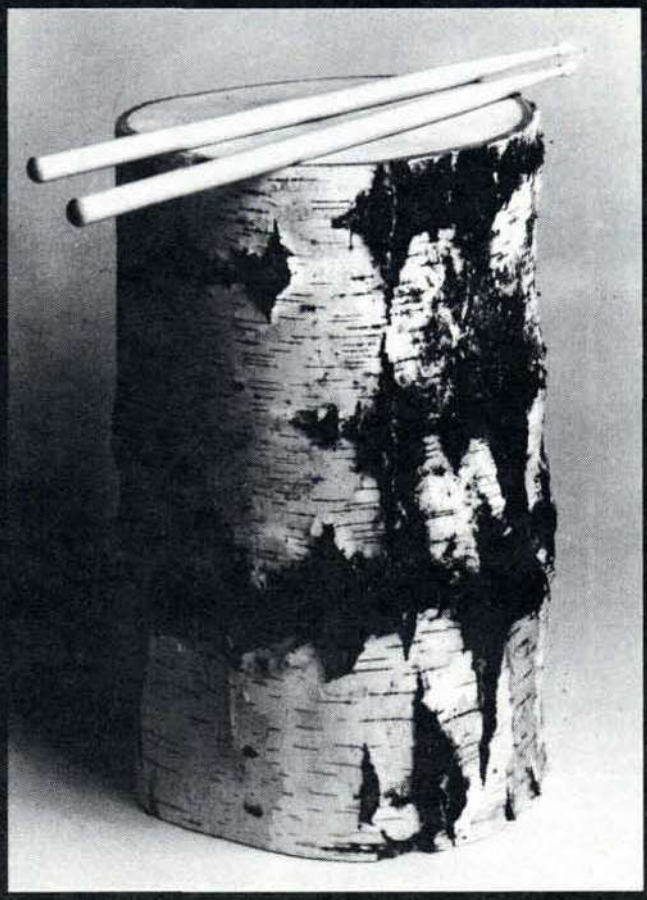
At 18, Cubby worked with Ann-Margret for a year and a half, playing in her live shows as well as T.V. specials, and then he landed the gig with the *Carol Burnette Show.* During that time, he also conducted and played for John Davidson and Debbie Reynolds, worked on the theatrical presentation, *Your Own Thing,* and was *Hair's,* musical director and drummer, working seven days a week, day and night, and loving it. He left the *Carol Burnette Show* after six years when he was offered a job with the Carpenters. He stayed with them for six years, until they quit touring in 1979, but he enjoyed playing in a successful pop group and would like very much to do that again in the future.

"When I joined the Carpenters, I had three days to learn the show with no music—only a tape. I walked around A&M Records with the tape to my ear, rehearsing and learning all the drum fills because Richard wanted to reproduce everything that either Karen or Hal Blaine had done," he laughs, imitating a Hal Blaine fill in the air. "I was going crazy trying to learn all these fills and what song they went in and where. At that time Karen was playing too, and we were playing exactly the same fills on the same drums. We did that for a year or two with Karen still playing. She gradually got away from the drums, which was like pulling teeth. She loved to play, and at first, she hated being out front. When she came out front, her drumset disappeared and I more or less played everything. We did do one big Gershwin medley together where she had all the Hal Blaine tom-toms, timpani and bells, and we did a big drum number, trading fours and eights and such. I enjoyed playing their music and never got tired of it. As time went by and I played the show more and more, I changed a lot, but nobody even noticed it. I still did the fills that were important. If there was an obvious thing, like in 'Close to You,' where the drum fill was an obvious drum fill, it would stay that way because that was part of the record, and you don't want to mess with that. But there's always this thing in my blood—I'm a show-biz person and I don't care who I work with. My object is to make that show better. They're out there in front and I'm playing the music. If I can add anything to it that is going to make it flashy or more exciting, I do. Andy Williams' show is real laid back with the 'Godfather' and 'Moon River' and such, but there are times in his show where I can play the things a little bit rockier, a little younger in style, and do some fills and flashy things that make it a little more exciting. I can lay back and play just like a bebop book, but I don't like to do it that way. It's a show and it should be played like a show.

"I think probably the most important thing about playing a show is to be able to play all kinds of music. Don't put anything down. I've played everything from country/western, to jazz, to rock 'n' roll, to easy listening Carpenters stuff, to piano and drums in a rehearsal hall. If you play good music, no matter what it is, what's wrong with it? I don't put anybody's music down. I don't particularly like heavy metal music, but there are some good heavy metal bands. So when you play shows, you really have to have an open mind about music and about playing all kinds of music. Music is such an intangible thing. One person's idea of the way something should be is not always your idea of the way it should be. The way Tony Newley writes and performs a song is totally different from the way Andy Williams would sing the same song, or that arrangement might be totally different.

"Reading is also important, but not as important as you might think. It's like what Jack Sperling said: 'There are only so many ways an orchestrator can write something, and after you've seen it a million times, it's second nature. You just glance at it and automatically know what it says.'

"Knowing how to work with a click track is also important. I work with click tracks all the time and it's tricky. The main thing about a click track is to relax, I think, and just kind of let it go along with you, because once you start tensing up, then you're all up and down, up and down. Just lay on it and once your ear is accustomed to it, it doesn't have to be all that loud. I keep bringing up the Juliet Prowse thing, but it's a good example. If there's a tempo change, there's usually a warning to let you know that you're in a new tempo. We know ahead of time that there are two clicks before the new tempo comes, or in



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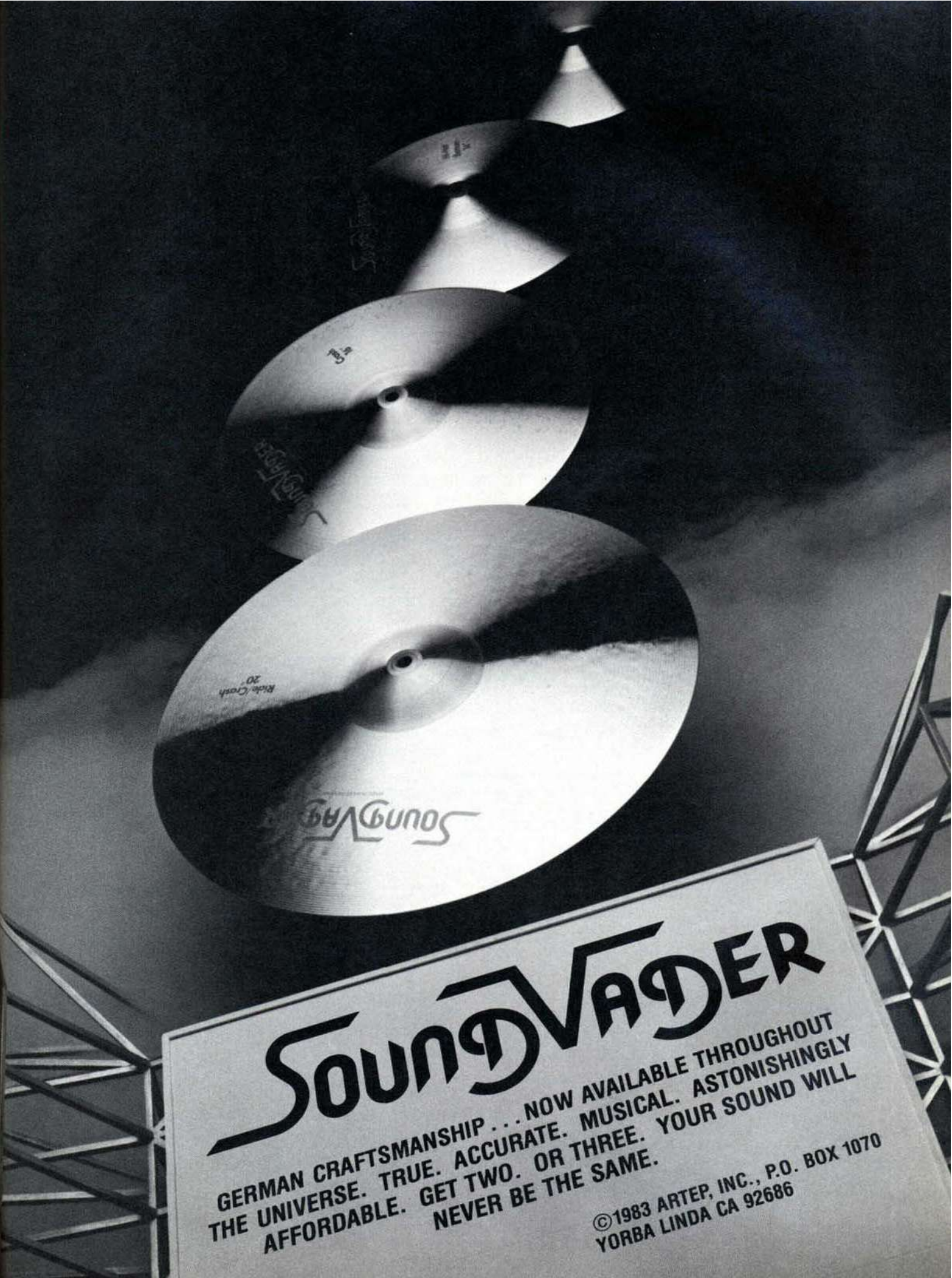
At 37, it's evident Cubby hasn't been hurt any by having been entrenched in show business all his life. That is not always the case, however, for success at a young age is not always easy to handle. Was he always so responsible and down to earth? How did he manage to maintain the balance of being a young "star" and a normal nine-year-old kid?

"My parents and older brothers kept everything in perspective for me and didn't let me get a big head or out of line. When I was doing the *Mickey Mouse Club,* we'd get done at the studio about 5:30 or 6:00, and in the summer, I could still get home and go to the park across the street and play baseball. I had my close buddies and friends and nobody in the neighborhood treated me different from anybody else.

"When I was rehearsing for Newley's show *Chaplin,* one night I was walking to my car and this lady called my name. I turned around and it was a mother of one of the kids in the show. She came up to me and asked, 'Do you think it's okay that my kid is in show business? Do you think it hurts any or they lose their childhood?' I told her, 'No, I don't think so at all. I think it helped me. I matured faster, I think. I saw a lot of things, I worked with a lot of adults, but I don't think I missed anything.'

"When I got the *Mickey Mouse Club* job, my parents told me I would be leaving my friends at school and I would be going to school at Disney Studios. I might not have as much time to see them or play ball, and they asked if I really wanted to do this. I said 'Yes.' The decision was mine. If I had said 'No,' that would have been the way it would have been. And I'm sure that at any point while I was at Disney, if I had been down, or decided I didn't want to do the show anymore, contract or no contract, they would have marched up to Walt's office and told him that I didn't want to do it anymore; 'Sue us if you want, but he's not going to do it.'

"I think it's up to the parents to make sure it's done right. As long as it's fun for the child, great. If it becomes a hassle and he's got a long face and he's in a bad mood all the time, then it's not worth it. Then why do it? I don't want to work with people I don't like now that I'm an adult, so why would I want to do it as a kid? The bottom line is that it should be fun."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Transcribed by James Morton

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Rick Allen:
"Rock of Ages"

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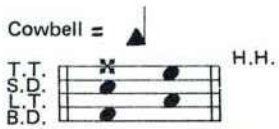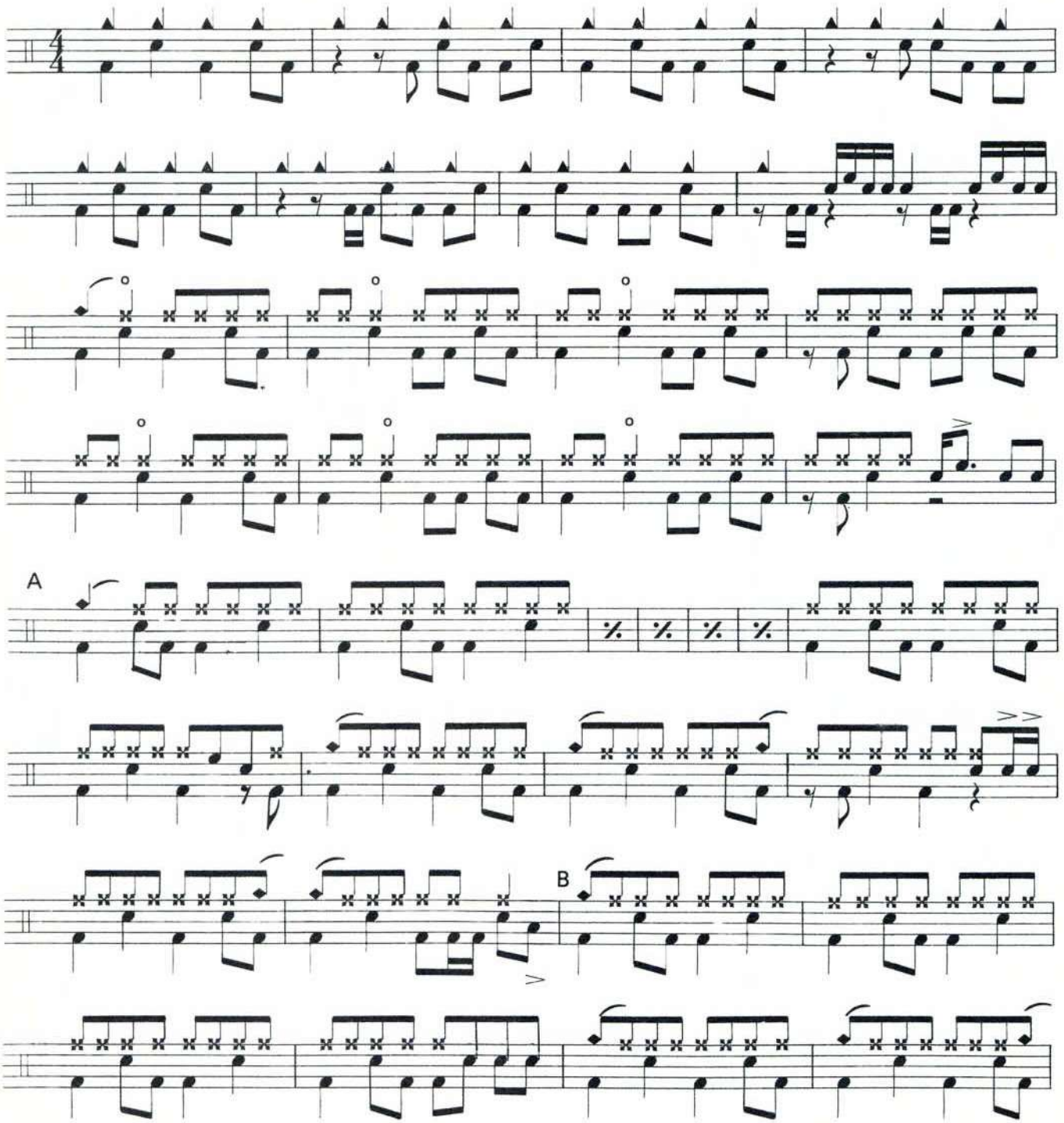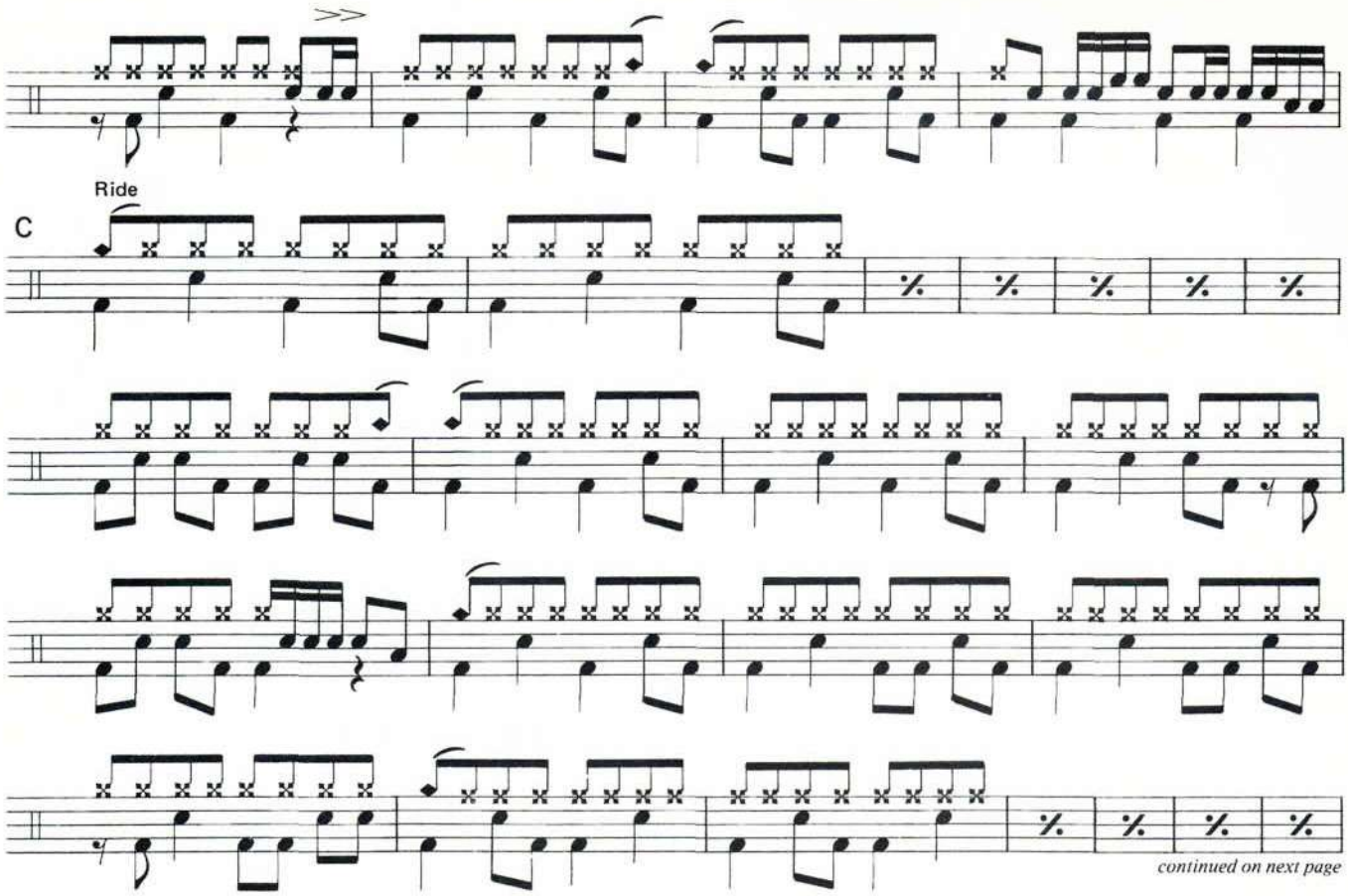
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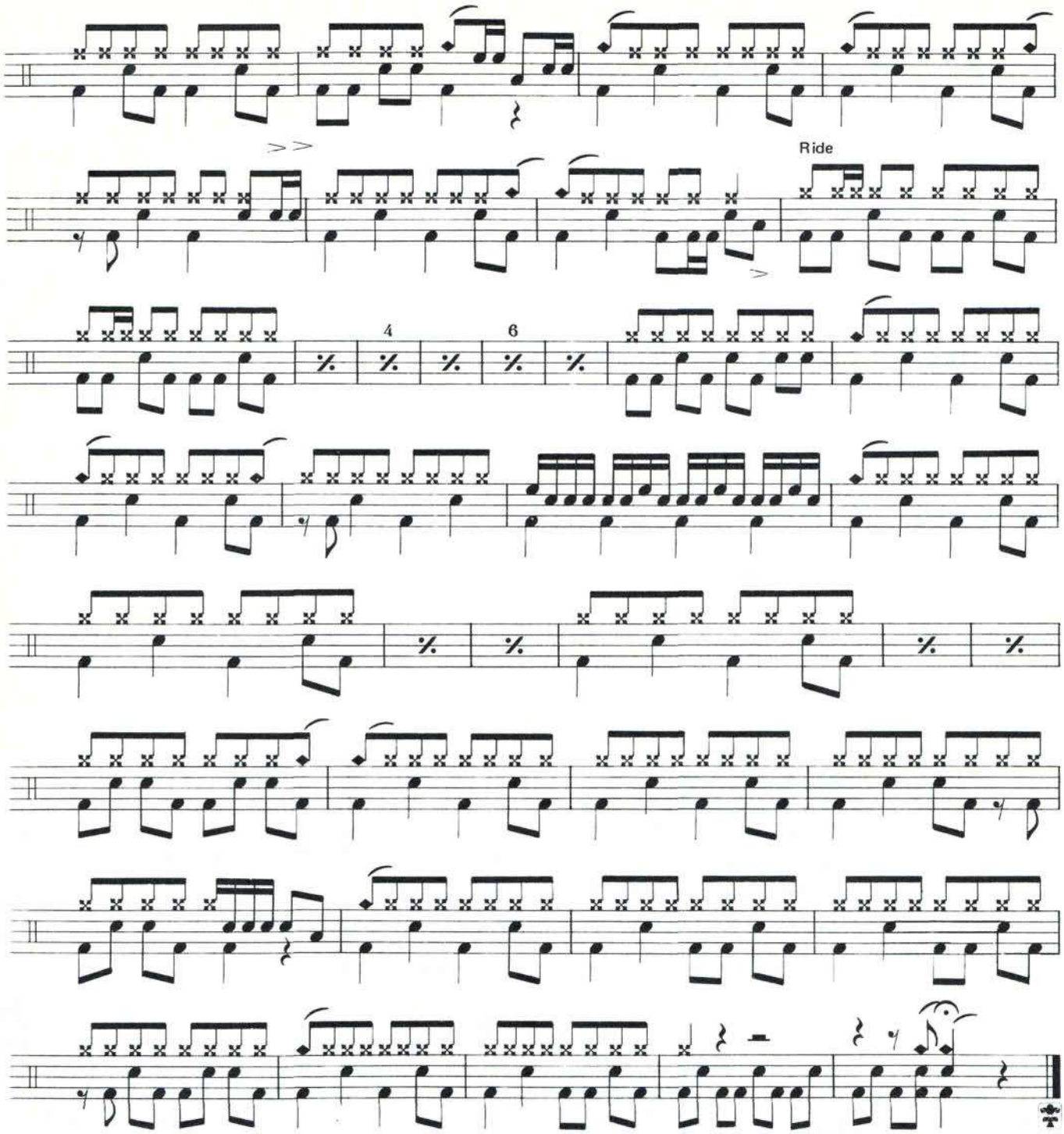
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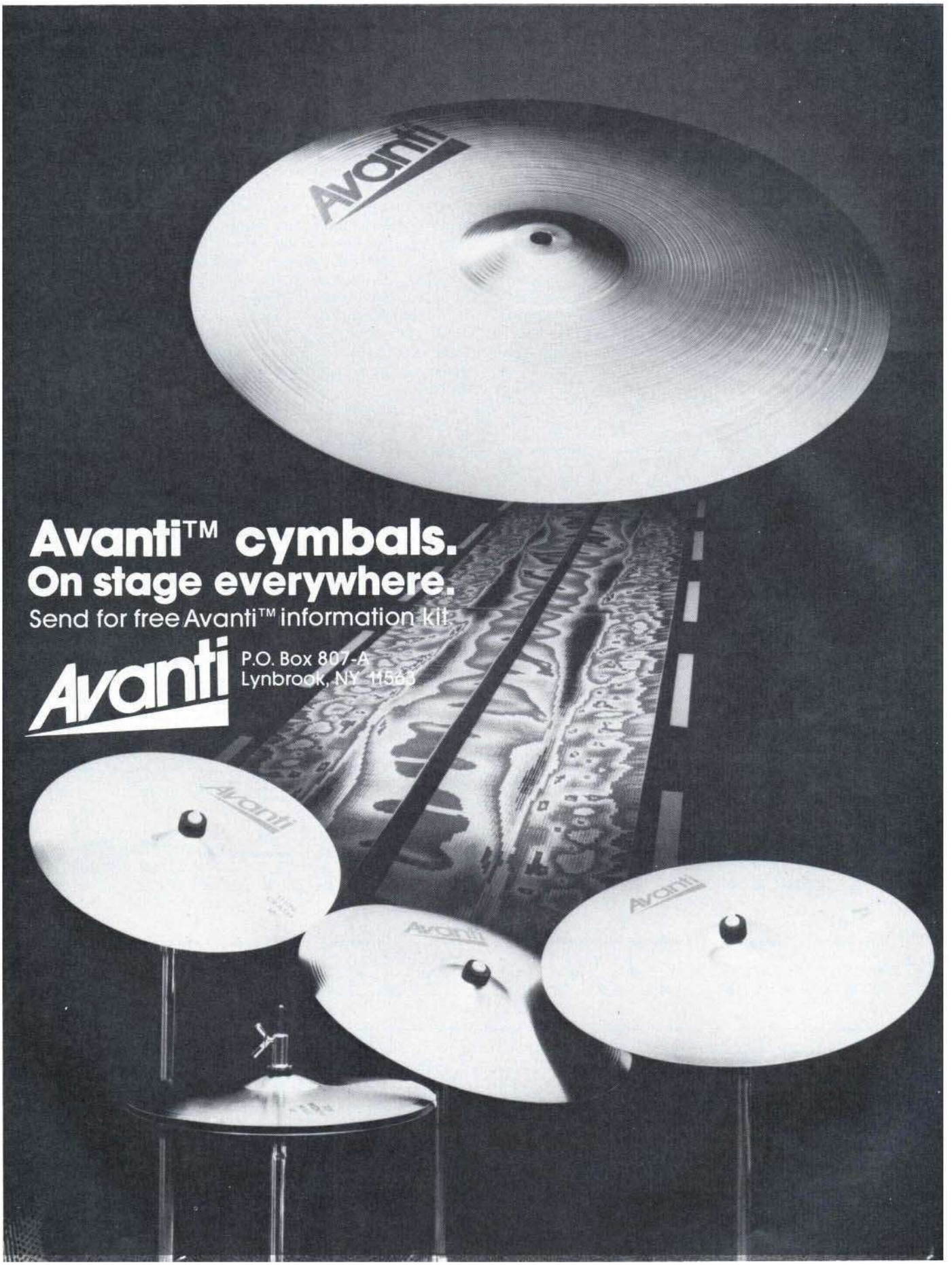
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by Paul R. Albrecht

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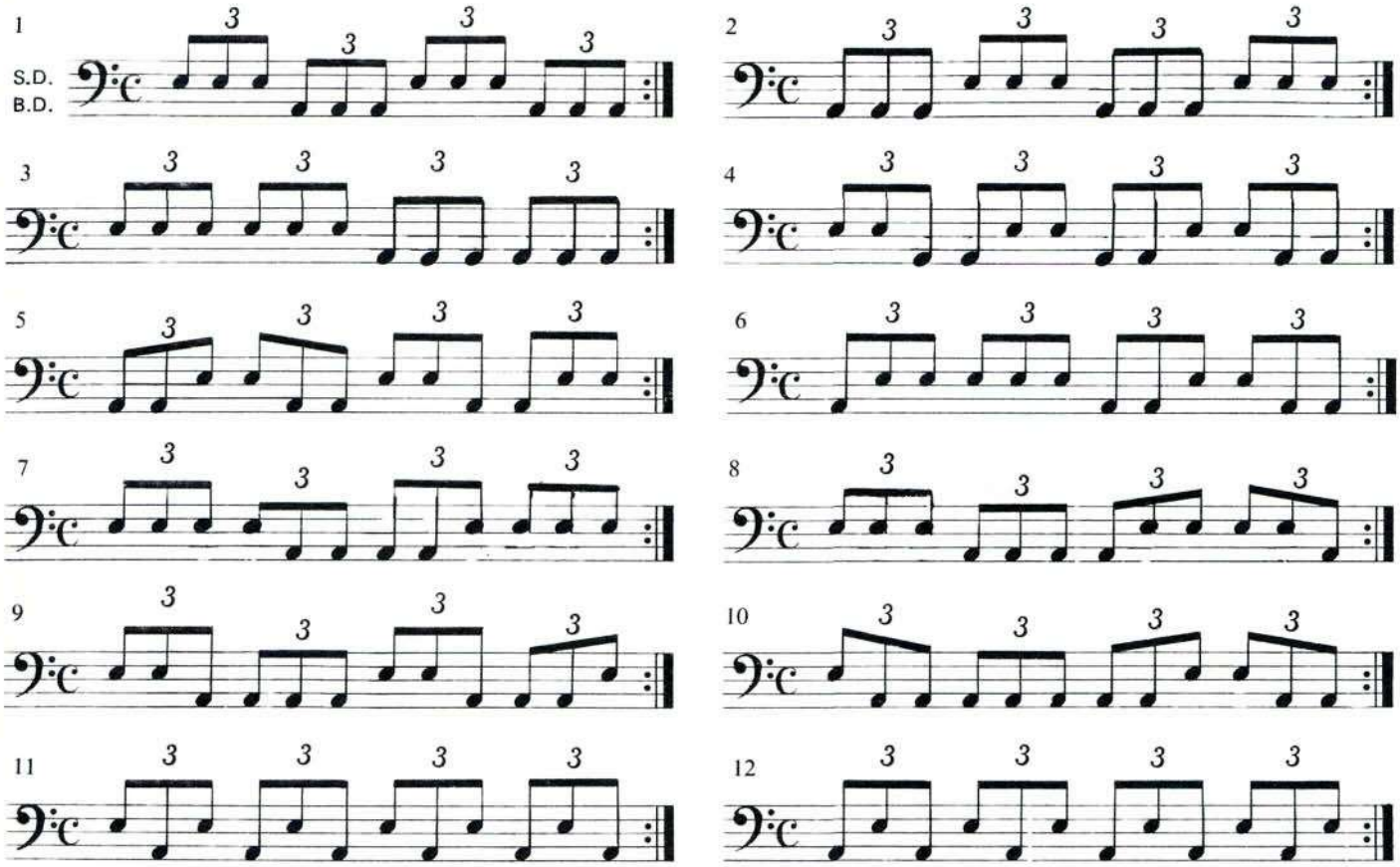
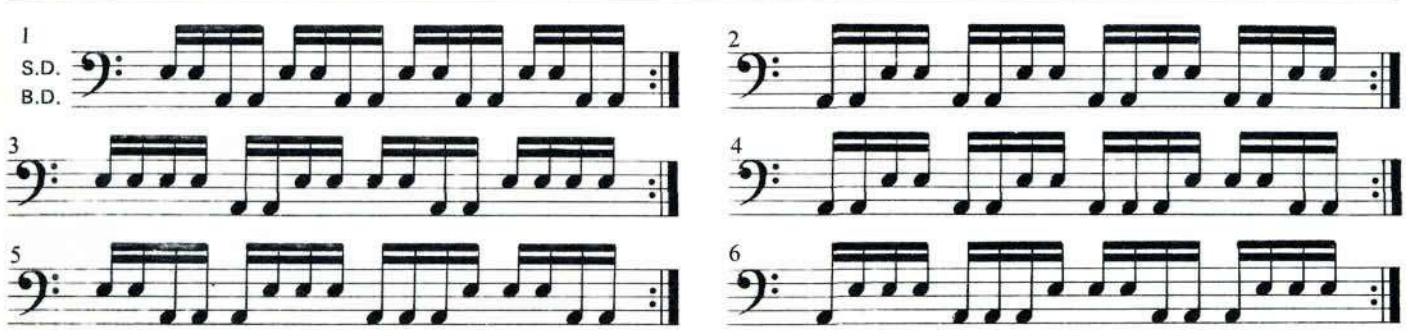
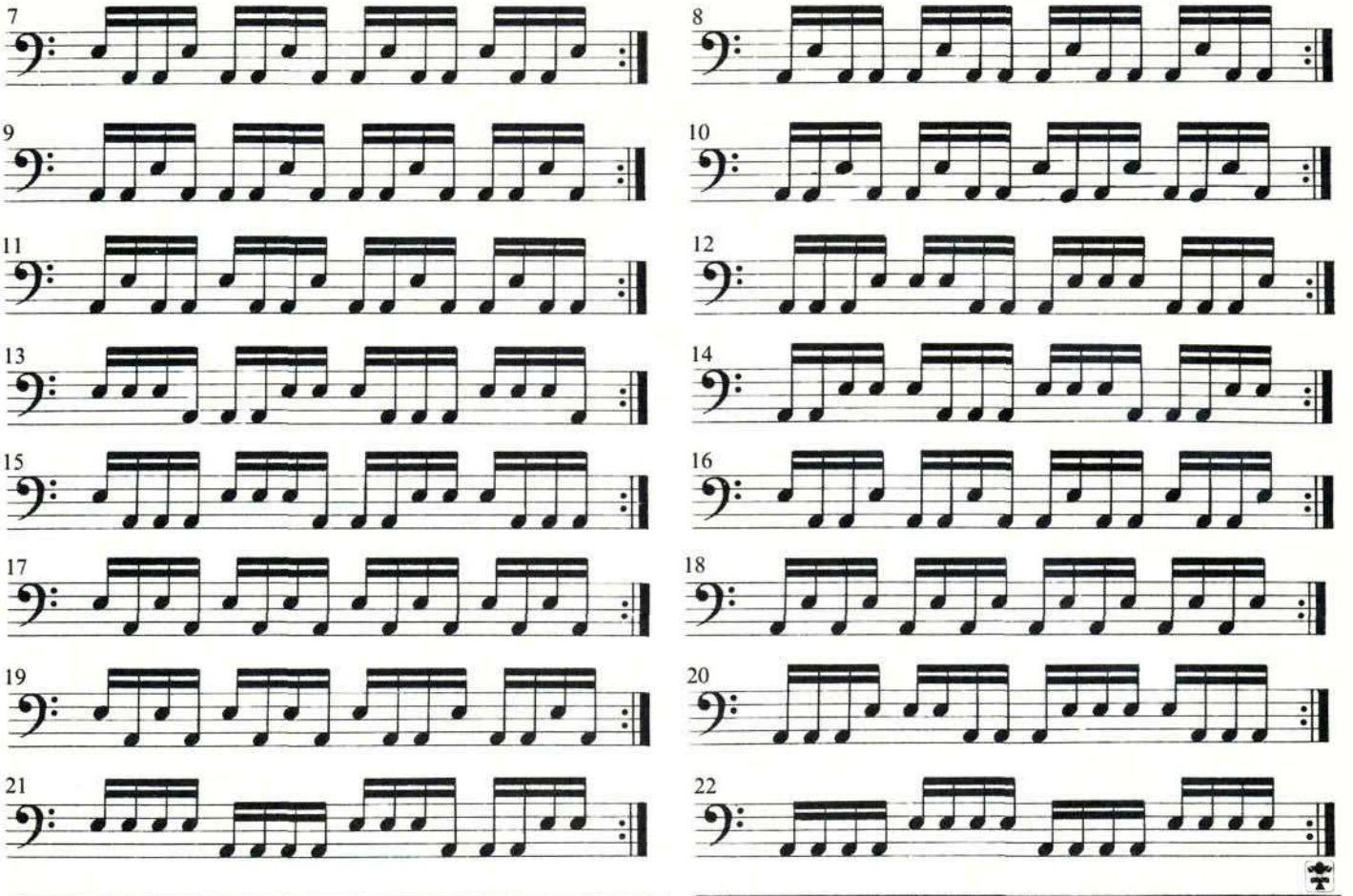
Start slowly and build speed gradually over a period of days and weeks. You will probably experience some muscle fatigue, especially in the beginning. This is normal. When your leg gets tired or sore, stop for a while, and resume practice later. Use the same common sense you would use when starting any new exercise or physical activity. Practice regularly but rest periodically. You will usually find that you are stronger when you come back.

All the 8th-note triplet exercises below can be played (1) as written or (2) against quarter notes or the jazz time pattern on the ride cymbal or hi-hat. The 16th-note exercises can be played (1) as written or (2) against quarter notes or 8th notes on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.



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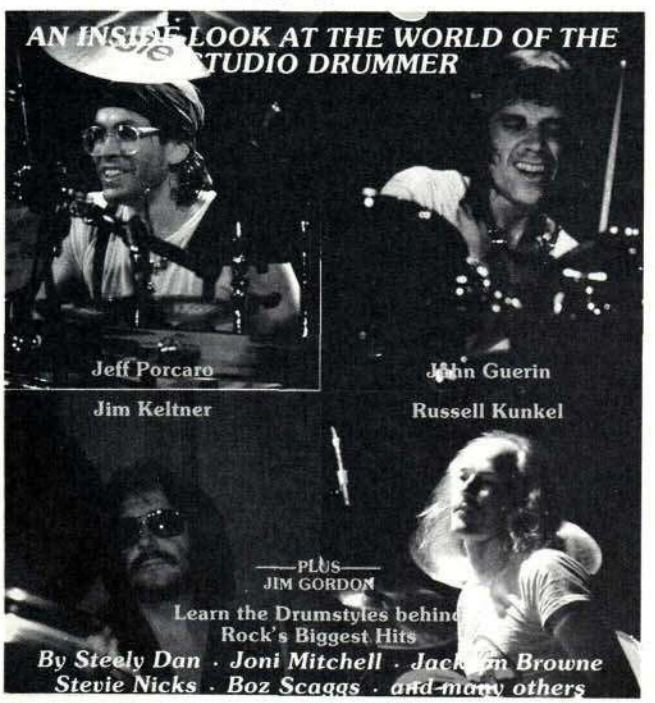

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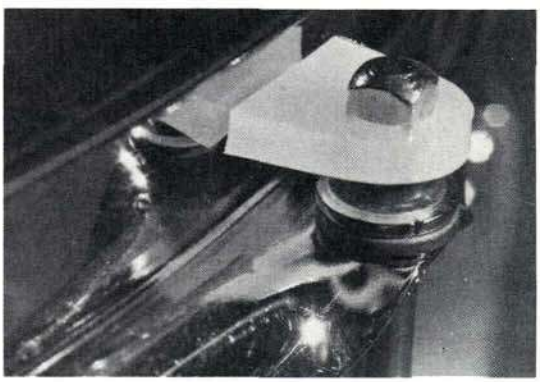

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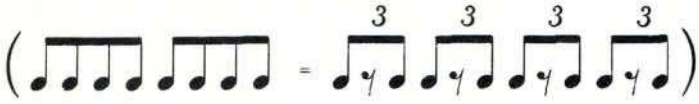
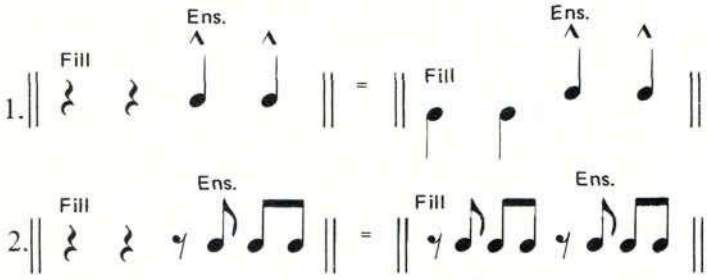
Foundation Studies for Dig Band

Before dealing with specifics, it is important to have some general ideas about what a fill should be and what a fill should do. The fill must be in time. It should not rush or drag. The fill should maintain the rhythmic interpretation and style of the music, or "chart." For example, one would probably not use a fill figure consisting of "straight" 8ths and 16ths (as in rock, funk, and Latin) when playing a medium tempo swing built on a rhythmic foundation of "swung" 8ths.



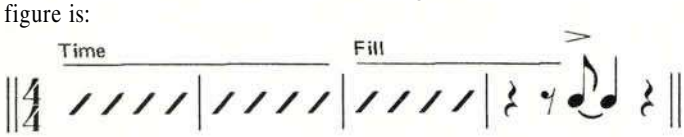
The fill should maintain the dynamic level of the ensemble unless otherwise indicated. Fills must facilitate, not hinder, the entrance of the band. Save the fireworks for your solo. In general, rhythmic simplicity will ensure your accuracy and the band's confidence in you. Fills are not "short solos." They should not stand out. They should sound like part of the chart by maintaining the metric, dynamic, rhythmic, and stylistic character of the music.

How, then, does one know what to play in a fill, given these general ideas? First, we must develop a fill vocabulary just as most of us have developed and mastered a verbal vocabulary. We learned to speak by listening and copying what we heard. This same process applies to learning fill figures. Often, fills may be taken from band figures either preceding or following the space to be filled. You create your figures from rhythmic and melodic materials within the music. Two very common examples are:



Thus, we see the importance of being able to read a chart and listen to it simultaneously, just as you "hear" words in your mind while reading this.

Here is a simple system for developing your big band vocabulary. The system works well with the many figures offered in Ron Fink's excellent book, *Drum Set Reading* (Alfred Music). The fill figure is:



STEP 1. Fill with only quarter notes playing only the snare drum:

Use alternate sticking, leading with the left as well as the right hand (LRLR and RLRL). Since the ensemble note is tied and therefore long, play it with a crash cymbal backed with either a bass drum, and/or a rim shot on the snare. If the ensemble note falls on the left hand (as it will if LRLR is used), crash the left cymbal with your left hand. Don't cross over with the right hand. Play the hi-hat with your foot on "2" and "4" throughout all exercises.

STEP 2. Using the same six quarter notes, play them on the rest of the drums, including the bass. Don't forget to play the hi-hat on "2" and "4"! Think in terms of high to middle to low sounds, and vice versa. Think middle to high; middle to low. Think single strokes and multiple strokes. For example, one note on the snare (single stroke), two on the rack tom, two on the floor tom, and one on the bass. Then back up to the snare and crash playing the ensemble note. Explore the possibilities. There is no such thing as a "mistake" when practicing, thinking and experimenting in this way.

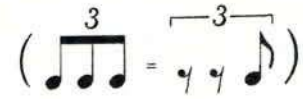
STEP 3. Add embellishments to the quarter notes: flams, ruffs, and unisons (hands played together). Remember that the quarter and its embellishment may be played on one drum, on two drums (embellishment on one drum, the quarter on another), or between the hands and feet (embellishment on the snare, quarter on the bass, for example).

STEP 4. Substitute 8th-note triplets for the quarters. At first,

play them only on the snare using the following Stickings: (1) LRL RLR; (2) RLR LRL; (3) LRR; (4) LLR; (5) RLL; (6) RRL; and any others you devise. Add embellishments to the triplets. Try accenting the second or third notes of the triplets as well as the first notes.

STEP 5. Play the triplets on the entire set, following the same guidelines presented for the quarter notes. Substitute the bass drum for the right hand (left if you're left-handed).

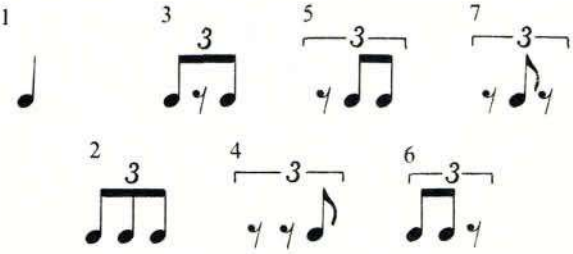
STEP 6. Substitute the third note of the 8th-note triplet for the complete triplet.



Follow the previous applications: played on snare, played on the entire set, with embellishments, etc.

STEP 7. Other substitutions are:

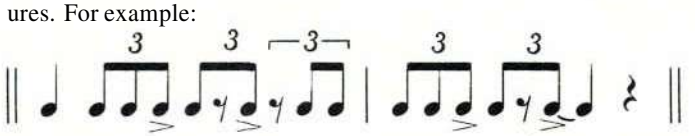
STEP 8. We now have a basic vocabulary of seven figures:



by Ed Soph

Fills

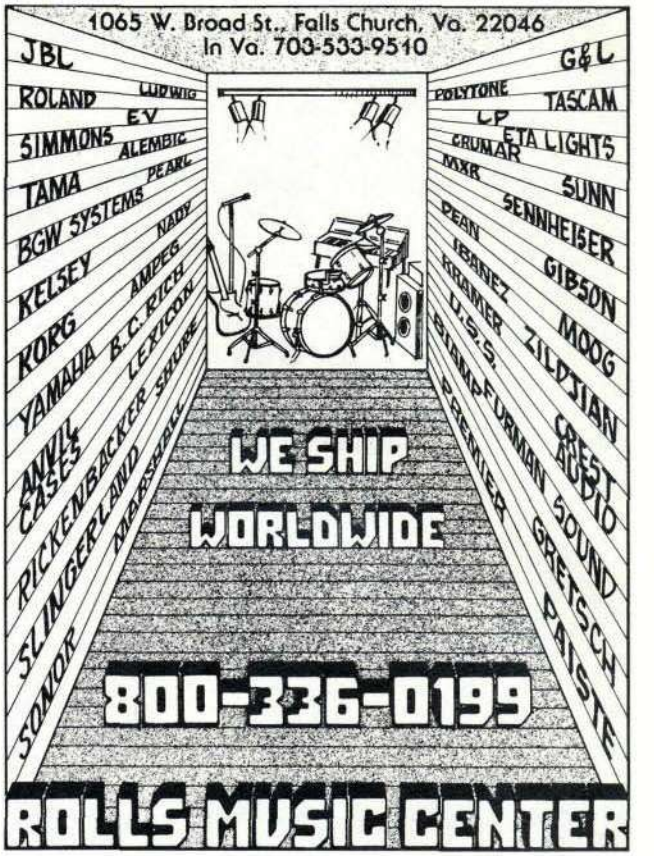
Experiment with putting them together to form your own fill figures. For example:

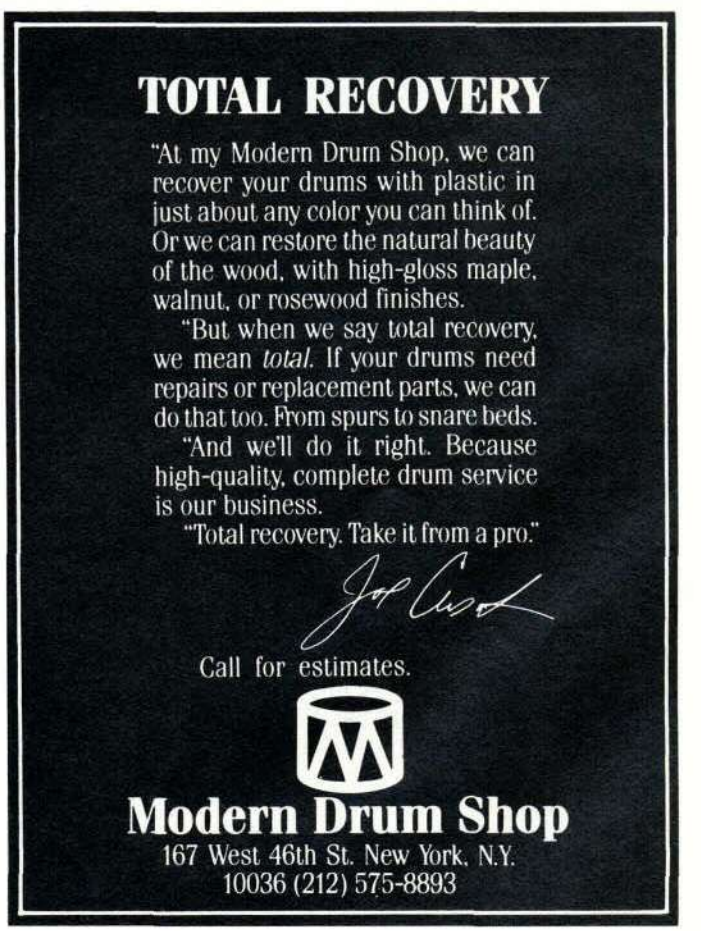


Explore the possibilities. From now on, the answer to "Can I do it this way?" is "Yes!"

SOME PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Always practice your exercises with regard for tempo, dynamics and accents. Avoid tempos, dynamic levels, and accent patterns with which you are already familiar. Practice with and without a metronome. Sing your fill figures before you play them on the set. Play them as loud and soft ensemble figures. Play them as though they were background figures, or riffs, behind a soloist. Practice with open ears and an open mind. Listen and concentrate. Tape record your practice sessions. The first step towards listening and reacting to others is to be aware of what you are playing. Most importantly, listen to the big bands: Count Basie, Woody Herman, Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, Mel Lewis, Louis Bellson, Buddy Rich, and Rob McConnell. LISTEN!





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Cirone continued from page 23

book, *The Logic of it All.*

RM: I remember a part where I was instructed to play a jazz rhythm on a cymbal with a brush, but it was marked double forte, and I had to cut through an 80-piece orchestra that was also playing double forte. I knew it would never be heard, so I used a stick. The conductor stopped everybody and said, "You're supposed to be using a brush on the cymbal." "Yeah,'but . . ." "I'M SURE THE COMPOSER KNEW WHAT HE WANTED!"

AC: Well, that was a good judgment on your part, but if he doesn't like it, that judgment doesn't count any more. [laughs] We've got to realize that about our job. Sometimes we forget, and that's when problems happen. The conductor is in charge—right or wrong, it doesn't matter.

RM: Getting into an orchestra now is much different than the way you did it. Today, a lot of people contend that despite the open auditions, you have to know someone, and the way to get into a major orchestra is to study with the timpanist or the principal percussionist. What would you tell someone who wants to someday play in a major symphony?

AC: Today, there's no real one thing a person can do besides being the best player at the given time at any audition, because the committees today don't just consist of the timpanist and the percussionists. There are ten people from within the orchestra, and the conductor has the last say. Now, if there is a local person who plays extra in the orchestra, and that person does play very well at the audition and is one of the top three, the conductor, knowing this person, may go in this person's favor. But if that player doesn't get in the top two or three, it really wouldn't matter if that person knew everybody or not. With the behind-the-screen auditions that most orchestras have, at least in the preliminaries, it doesn't matter at all. You have to at least get to the finals on your own. Then, at that point, it is possible that a personal connection could have some effect.

I've been involved in a number of auditions in San Francisco—we've been through both percussion and timpani—and in my own mind, I have been firmly convinced that the people who got the jobs were the best players of the ones who came at the time. Now, maybe of the top two or three, I thought one was better qualified than the one the conductor picked, but the person certainly played up to par and was qualified for the job. I think in our orchestra, our audition system is a fair one, and the people who are on the committees act in a fair manner. The conductors sometimes like to bring in their own people—that's always true—but their own people have to play well enough, or else they're not going to be picked.

I think everyone has a chance at these auditions, especially today. Now, the

younger player has more of a chance, because in the past, people like me had to be recommended by someone—people who didn't go to Juilliard didn't have a chance at that job. Today that's not true. It doesn't matter where you come from or where you studied. You don't have to be a Juilliard graduate today; you have to be the best player at that given time, and you have to do something that gives the conductor confidence and allows you to be hired. Of course, even then, you're only hired for a probationary period. The real test comes in the next two years, after you're in the orchestra.

RM: You say that it doesn't matter anymore where someone goes to school, but in the back of the *International Musician,* where they list the audition notices, orchestras usually ask for a resume so that they can screen the auditionees. The only resume a college student will have is the school and the private teacher. Wouldn't a student who went to Juilliard or the New England Conservatory look better than someone who went to a lesser-known school?

AC: Well, at one point we started screening the auditions. Up to that point, we took everybody who applied, but it got to be ridiculous—too many people were coming and we couldn't handle all of them. So the last time we had percussion auditions, we screened the applicants. Now, it didn't matter what school they came from necessarily, because we were looking for what they did after school. We didn't want the kid in school; we wanted the kid who was out of school and already had some experience. That became more important, and that's how our decision was made. That's why I say the school doesn't matter.

The drawback to screening is that you might screen young, very talented people. Give them a year of training and they're going to be first class. It's sort of like the football draft—you aren't necessarily looking for the position; you're looking for the best athlete. In a sense, that's what happens at an audition—you look for the best musicians. Maybe they don't know all the literature, but learning the notes is one of the easiest parts of playing in the orchestra. It's the other things: having solid rhythm; playing together; being able to watch the conductor; being able to anticipate; being flexible; using imagination when the conductor asks you to do different things; being able to work under pressure. The notes? Usually you can play the notes. That's not always the hardest thing to do.

RM: What is your advice to people who have just graduated and who want to be in a symphony? Should they take any type of symphonicjob?

AC: A person who's in a small school should probably go to a major city and begin to get established as a freelance percussionist. Some students take jobs in foreign countries; they may be a little easier to get because not everybody will audition for them. When you play in a foreign orchestra, you do get a certain amount of experience; you are playing the same literature that everybody else plays; it's just a different environment. That's one way, if it's to your liking. Playing in community orchestras is the next step, because they're also playing the same literature. Having a position in even a community orchestra shows something. The freelance things—if you can pick up traveling ballet companies, dance troups, those kinds of jobs—are good to have because they show professional experience. The person who wants to go on to orchestral playing has to play as much as possible with as many groups as possible to get experience. I tell my students every semester before we start, "Don't be afraid to take a job, even if it doesn't pay." They're in school now, so it's a slightly different level. "Get the experience; you cannot pay for that experience. There may be a little symphony out in some community who is doing a piece that needs extra percussionists, and they don't pay any money, but if you can play that repertoire part with them, you will be playing the same part they play in the New York Philharmonic. Don't even talk to me about getting paid, because I'm not going to take too highly to it. I want to see you jump and get that part and go play it." I

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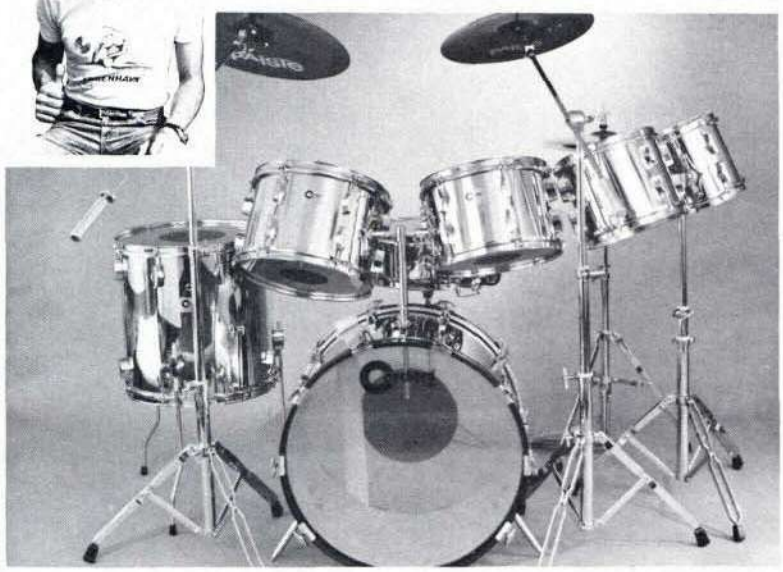


talk to them like that. So that is an absolute necessity.

When you graduate you've got to take as much work as possible in the field. If you get too far away from it, you begin to lose the training and the skill. We are all slaves to this business. If we don't keep up the technique, it will suffer. In our head we may know how it goes, but our muscles have to be continually trained.

RM: I know people who can play the excerpts blindfolded, but they can't follow a conductor. Have you ever seen a situation where the person who won the audition was subsequently unable to handle the job?

AC: We have had situations like that. This whole audition thing is still evolving. I don't know the answer.

I think the auditions are fair in that sense, but I don't always think they get the best player. They get the best player for the day. So many secure, professional people trying to get better jobs take auditions and don't even pass the preliminaries, because on that particular day, they got a little nervous and missed a couple of notes. Give them the job and they'd play any of that literature, but they just don't play auditions well. The students, who have been playing their recitals, and who are used to working eight hours a day on this material —where the professionals can't always do that—have a great advantage. As a matter of fact, one of my new proposals for our graduate program has to do specifically with this area. Instead of a student working so hard to prepare the Creston, I'm going to try to get them to prepare symphonic literature—audition material—as part of this curriculum so they could be doing something very practical. This is only for the students who have symphonic playing as a goal.

This is really a very serious subject for me, being in education, because I train a lot of percussionists. I look at the job field, and at the amount of talent that is around today, and I have to really ask myself the question, "What are these kids going to do? I know they're all not going to make it." So over the years, especially recently, I've developed what I call a "Lecture on Careers." I give this to my students as a group about once a year. Very simply, I say, "Look, you're here in music because you feel that this is the only thing you want to do. You don't want to be an accountant, you don't want a nine-to-five job, you don't have any other skill that you feel you've developed, so you study music. Now, you have to be realistic and see that once you graduate, you have to earn a living. You want to get married and have a family; more responsibility comes up. And yet, in the back of your mind, you still want a career in music." At that point, I define what, in my mind, is a career in music. Now, this is personal, but I do not consider traveling around the country in a

band a career in music, because I feel it's too difficult a life-style, and I don't encourage my students to pursue this area. I feel it's limited—one or two years, you're in a band being successful, fantastic. But don't do it for your whole life, because there's no life in it. That's my guidance to them. I talk of a career in music as something that has security, like a college position, a high school position, even a grammar school position teaching music, if that's their interest. And performance-wise, freelancing is a career. It's not one of my highest choices as a career, but it does have some security to it if you're a good freelance player in certain areas. Of course, orchestral playing is probably the most secure of the playing jobs, because you're under a full contract. So I look at a career as a position, either in a university or in an orchestra job, but after all, the jobs are very limited. I have about three students who could handle it, and every school has three or four, and so there is this great competition.

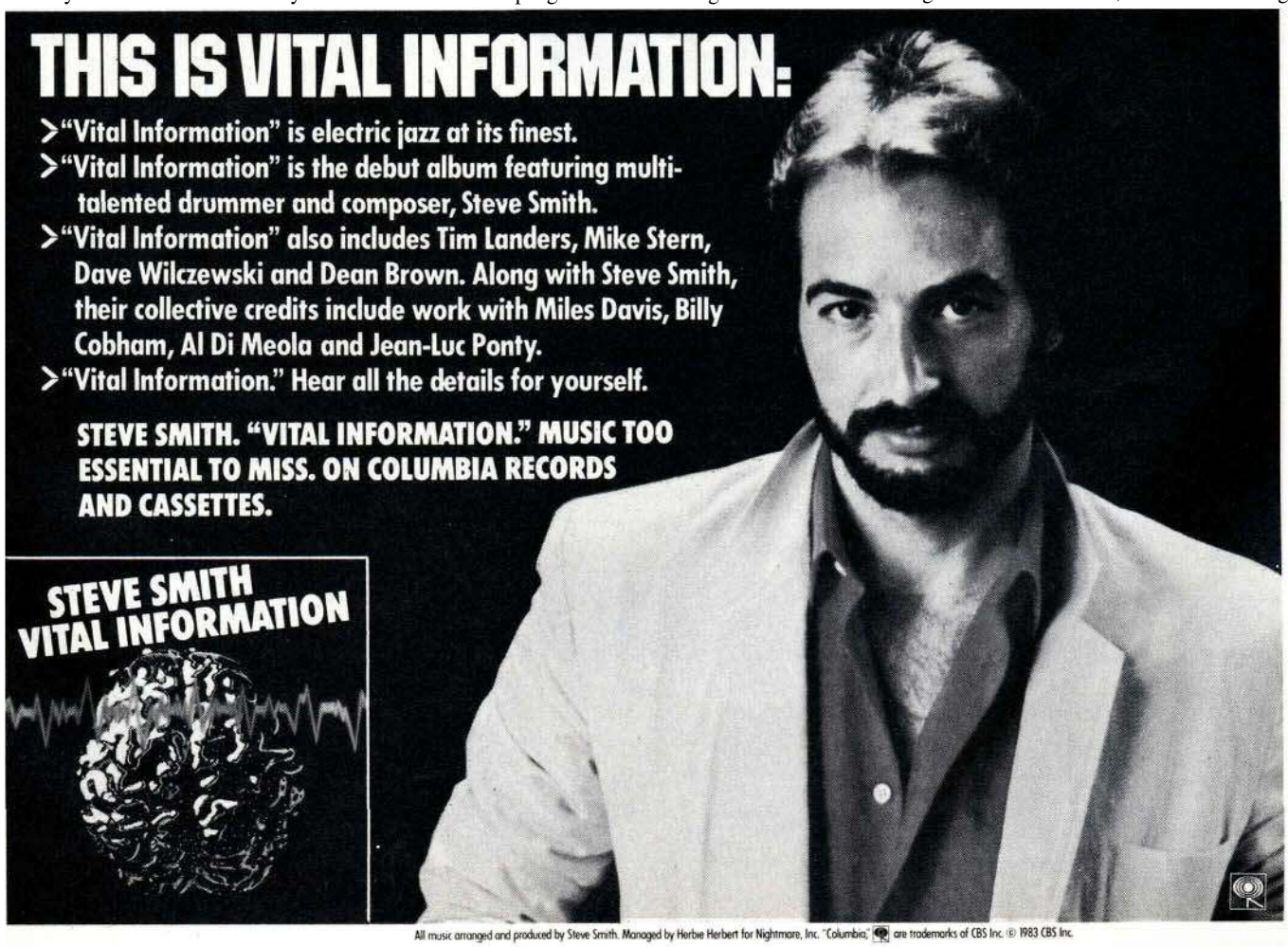
Here's my advice to my students: I say, "Look, go after your goals. Form that goal in your mind and do everything possible to attain it. When you graduate—and this is the key—you still have to earn a living in some way to support your career. Maybe take a part-time job. That's okay. But if you get too far away from music, as the years go on, you become less and less qualified for these jobs. It's very important in these years after school to stay in music and get all the experience possible, to add to that resume for a teaching job, or a performance situation. Now, if you did this for two or three years, and you've auditioned for five or six orchestras, and came up with zero, at some point—and it's not the same point for everybody—you've got to re-evaluate what you're doing. You have to look at this and say, 'Wait a minute. I cannot spend the rest of my life trying to get an orchestra job. I have not been successful; I've got to start thinking about the rest of my life.' " I would rather that some of these people would develop a career outside of music, than starve their whole life, trying to get something that's very difficult to attain. Music will always be a part of their life, no matter how they earn their living.

I use one of my former students as an example. He was in school getting his Bachelor's and Master's over a period of ten years. He would leave a semester, then come back. He got his Bachelor's, left, got a part-time teaching job, came back to get his credentials, then got a leave of absence from his teaching job, came back to get his Master's—he wound up getting his degrees, but he never got a full-time job in music. Then I didn't hear from him for a while, but all of a sudden, I saw him on television, doing a commercial for a computer program at a local college. I found out that he had gone to that school, trained in computers, got a successful job, and was now helping the school bring in more students. That, to me, is a success story. If he hadn't spent those ten years in music, what would he have done? He wasn't interested in computers ten years ago. He was interested in music. I could tell that he was never going to be a symphony musician, but should I have told him to change his major? He might have dropped out of school and never got an education.

So I believe that some students should be in music—they're getting an education—but I don't necessarily believe that they should make their living in music. If they don't have any other direction, we'll give them an education—that's become my philosophy as I see all these students pass through San Jose State University. I take it seriously, and I don't just want to teach them something that I know they can't use if they don't have the ability. I redirect them.

RM: Some people criticize music schools by saying that the schools are only preparing people to play in symphony orchestras, but that's not where most of the jobs are. In other words, schools are not keeping up with the times and preparing people for the real world, including club gigs, wedding receptions, or whatever.

AC: Well, I think it comes down to the training of a musician. For instance, when I was in Juilliard, I never learned how to play a wedding reception from Saul Goodman. I never learned how to play much mallets from Saul Goodman. But he taught me about music, and all the things



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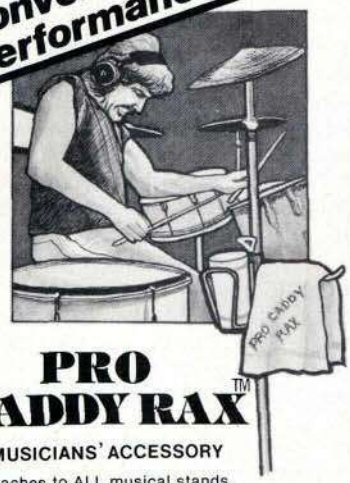

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he taught me, I applied to everything I did in music—even my compositions. He taught me from the masters. He was taught by Toscanani—that was his teacher—and he passed those things on to us. They were not how to hold your sticks, or how to play a Jewish wedding—what rhythms you need. No. He taught me concepts about music, about phrasing, about listening, and I applied them to all areas of music. I think that's the most important thing. There is only so much you're going to teach a student to the point where his talent and ability take off. Goodman didn't teach you what the rhythms were. You either knew that or you learned it on your own. He didn't spend time with that. He taught concepts, and I think that's really what a musician is all about.

RM: That reminds me of something Joe Morello said: He never studied jazz drumming with anyone, but he did study with people who taught him how to get a good sound out of the instrument, and then he applied that to jazz.

AC: He had the ability within himself to do that, and that's why he was so great. It wasn't because of his teachers. You know, I've had a lot of good students, but it wasn't so much because of what I did. I teach them all the same thing. Over the years, I've had maybe half-a-dozen people that I had to tell, "You *have* to play timpani." When they played timpani they got a sound—I could hear it. I taught them the same way as the other people, but the other people could not get that sound. These people had something special. When they played a Beethoven symphony for me, it sounded like they had played it their whole life. They knew things that I didn't even have to tell them. When I see that, I know they've got something special, and in the 19 years I've been there, I've only had five or six who have been able to do that. These people have gone on and been successful. So there's something inside of us that we get from God that enables us to do this. I can't explain it.

I look at myself as being a motivator more than anything else. I have to motivate these students because they're under so much pressure from their academic work, from society as a whole, from their parents, from their peers, from their girlfriends and boyfriends—they have all these distractions. And what's the first thing that goes? Their practice time. Everything else has to be done too. They've got to work, they've got to earn some money, they're moving this week, the car broke down—every excuse in the book—and that's why they couldn't practice. Well, I have to get them to put number one first. If you're in the music department, and you're a percussion major, that is number one. I don't want to hear about your English test. I can't tell them when to practice, but I can tell them to organize their time so everything gets done. Four years of college is a very serious time and you've got to really apply yourself. It's hard, even if you do apply yourself. If you don't apply yourself, it's impossible. So I look at myself as a motivator, first of all, to get their goals focused clearly, and then to keep them on track.

You know, sometimes students will come in for a lesson, and look like the world has collapsed. They don't say anything, but I say, "What's the matter?" "Oh ... I feel terrible." "Okay, let's sit down and talk." We don't even play a note that lesson. Maybe the family has a problem. They wind up crying, but you know, they've got to handle these problems in their life; they can't let it get to the point where they can't work. That happens once in a while—we all know that—but I try to get them on the track and understand the situation so they can bounce back and keep going. That's important. Sometimes they don't get that kind of counseling outside. As teachers, if we're just there to listen to the notes that they play, I don't think that we're doing our complete job. We have to look at the student as a total person, and they do have problems, especially in earning money. They work in pizza places or whatever to make this money, but if they have to do that too many hours and they can't practice, why be in school? I'll say,

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"Look, take a semester off. Go to work full time and earn enough money so that next semester you can come back to school and you won't have to work as much, because you can't do both." There's no cheating in music. You've got to do it yourself.

RM: Mel Lewis talks to students about such things as how to have a girlfriend and be a musician, because he saw a lot of students having problems because of their relationships.

AC: That's the awareness that teachers need to have. You know, when I give my talk on careers, I finish all this other stuff that we've talked about, and then very simply at the end, I say, "It's very important to get yourself together in three areas." I share my philosophy with them. I say, "First of all, you have to get yourself together physically, because if you're sick all the time, you can't produce very well. If you're not eating properly, or taking care of your health, you're going to have a lot of problems that take your energy away from this creative effort of music. Emotionally, it's very important to take care of yourself too. If you're always emotional and depressed, you're not going to produce well. Emotional stability is a little bit trickier than eating the right foods. There are a lot of reasons why people have emotional problems, but there are ways we can be helped. Don't be afraid to talk to someone about it. Maybe your thinking is a littie bit confused, and somebody can just straighten it out and you'll feel a lot better."

The other area is spiritual. In today's society, some students are not raised with a spiritual foundation. I don't push them too much, but I do say, "I feel it's important to have God in your life for life to be meaningful. My experience has been that after you've graduated, and found a job, and you're making money, and you've got a family, life will still be incomplete if you don't have your life together spiritually." I try to give them broader concepts than just the right sticking for "Porgy and Bess." These concepts are important. We're not machines.

I talk to them very strongly about drugs and alcohol, because it's so easy in a university atmosphere to get caught up in that. I tell them about it; that's all I can do. Some of them hear it, some of them don't, but at least I say it. At least if they have never heard it before, they hear it from me. A lot of them use their own rules and justifications—"This is alright; that's alright." I just tell them, "It's not alright." At least they heard it, and maybe it'll balance them out in some way.

See, one of my great interests outside of music is organic gardening. When you start working with nature like that—we use no pesticides, no artificial fertilizer or anything like that—you begin to see how nature really works, and that you don't need any of these outside, artificial things to grow vegetables. I believe that is true with our lives, too. The more dependent we are on artificial things, the less I think we're experiencing our real selves in the world. I had a student who was a chain smoker, and there's no smoking allowed in my classroom. Well, we had a rehearsal that had gone on for about an hour, and this guy had to have a cigarette, right? But he had to play. So what did he do? He opened the window and stuck his head out so he could smoke a cigarette. [laughs] His mind wasn't on his music. Now that may be an extreme example, but I imagine other people have those feelings, and as soon as there's a break, they have to go out and have a cigarette, or a cup of coffee, or a drink, or some kind of drug. Now obviously, people can work with these things. There are many people who smoke and play, and many people probably take drugs and play. Maybe it doesn't affect your talent. I don't know, but I do know that it affects your life. And what good is having a great talent and a great ability if your life is a disaster? What good is that career?

Even in your own magazine, I remember one drummer you interviewed—I don't remember his name but his picture was like death walking. I show things like that to my students and say, "Don't let this happen to you." I read a little bit about him and his life was kind of tragic. The guy was a great drummer; I don't take anything away from him, but what good is it? And I share this with my students because I hate to see any of them get into this; I would rather not get them into music if that's what's going to happen.

Personally, I'm a born-again Christian, and that has been a big influence in my life. I see things a lot differently because of that. I believe that a lot of people—especially students—don't have this other little dimension to balance their lives out. They're so idealistic; they're so into technique and development, and their idols, that they don't really look at their whole life. I mention those three areas, because it's important to be balanced physically, emotionally and spiritually. We know that money doesn't make you happy; we see that all the time in the glamour world. And the people who have the biggest jobs are not the happiest people either. Those things don't make us happy. See, I can teach kids how to play drums, but I can't teach them how to be happy if that's all I teach them. So I try to tell them which areas would be important to their life, because they can be the greatest drummers in the world, have the greatest jobs, and be the most miserable people. So if you can get students to look at their lives, and think about other things besides music, maybe you can develop people who are going to be happy, while doing something they enjoy.

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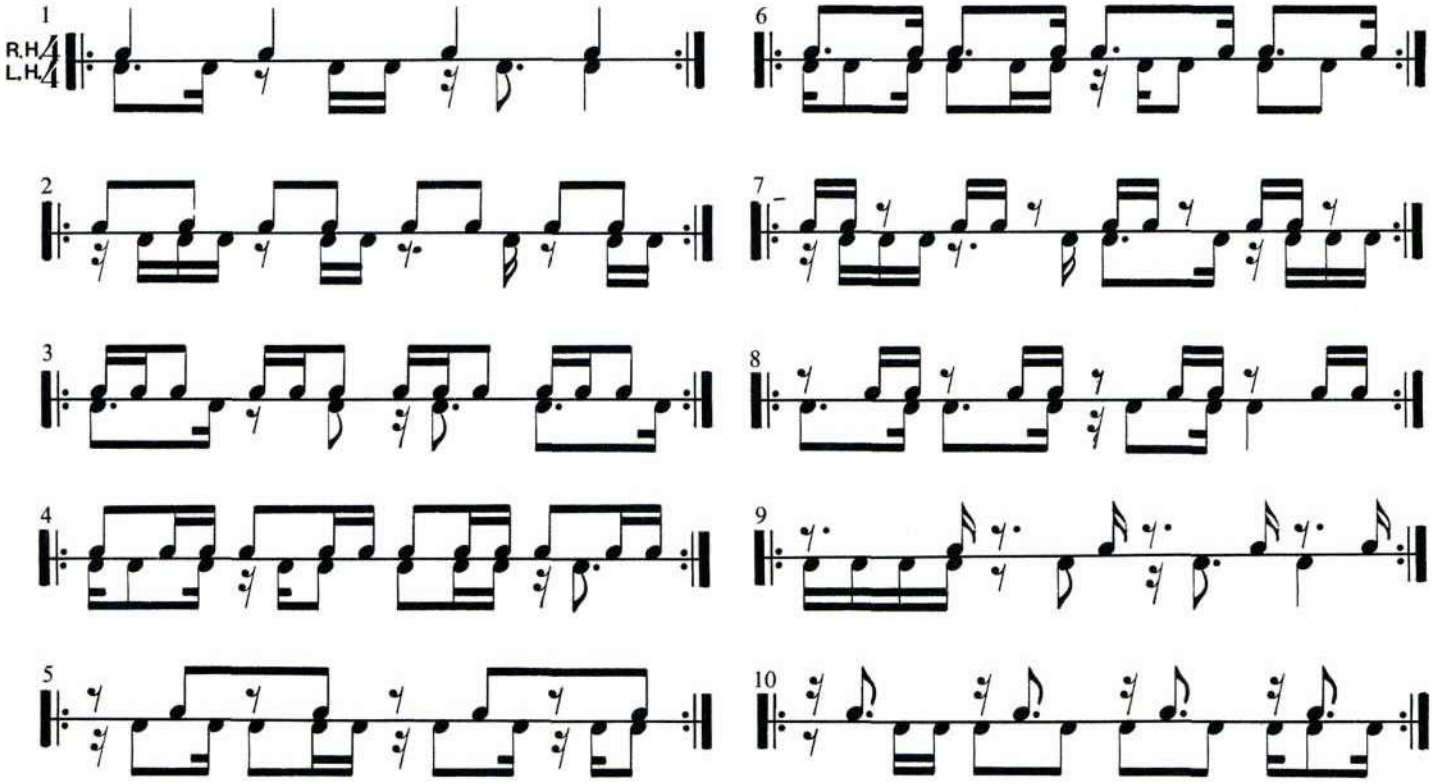
by James Morton

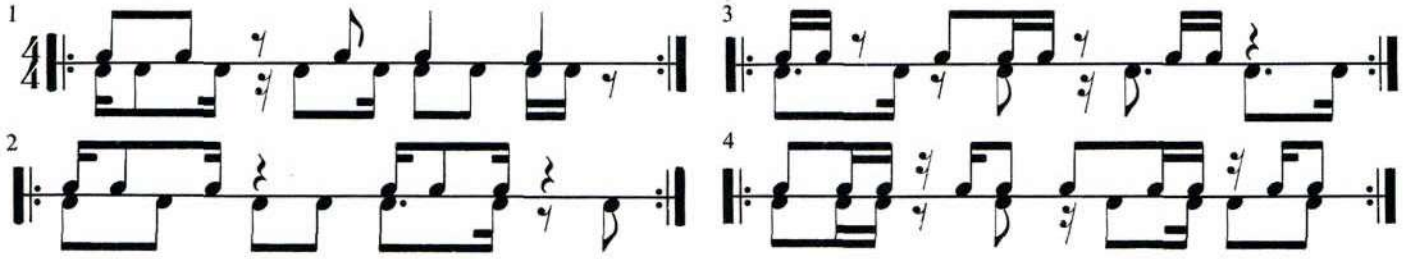
Fusion Independence

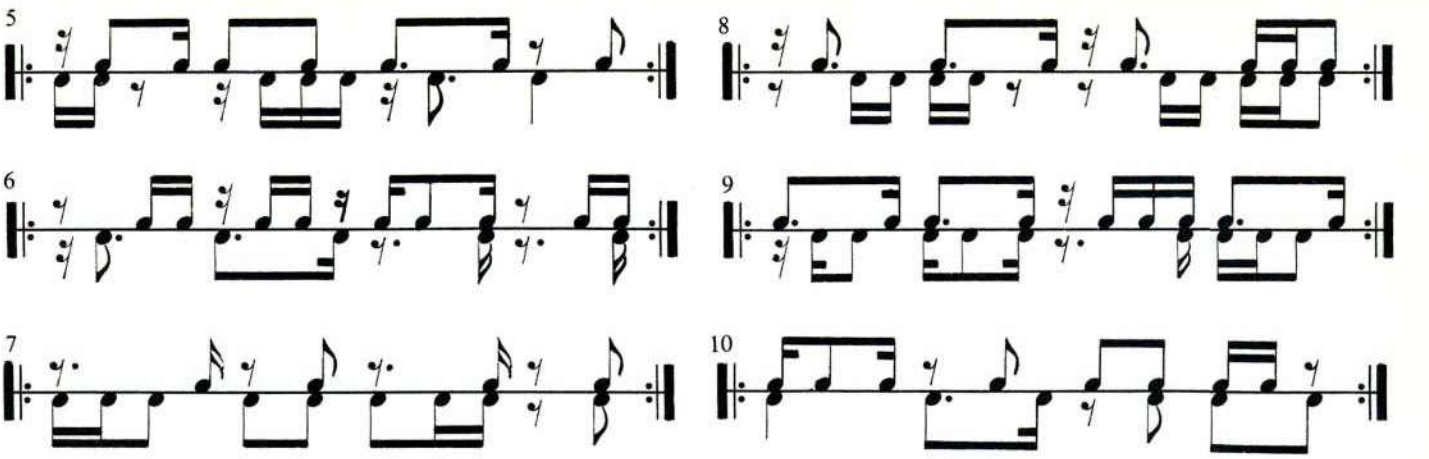
The name "fusion" indicates the fusing of jazz and rock. Fusion's predominately duple feel indicates a stronger allegiance to rock—or more accurately—funk. If fusion has adopted the syncopated feel of funk, then jazz has lent fusion drumming independence. Years ago, independence was primarily a jazz term, usually indicating the degree to which a person's limbs rhythmically improvise against each other. Today, regardless of the style of music performed, the conscientious drummer must have a high degree of independence ability. A sense of independence will give you the freedom to focus on the feel of the groove, and will breathe life into rhythms which might otherwise sound stagnant and stiff. These exercises were written to enable you to play with a greater degree of independence within the context and feel of fusion drumming,

PART1

(a) Each exercise is composed of two rhythms. Play each rhythm on a separate surface. Example: Right hand on cymbal or tom; left hand on snare.
(b) Maintain a quarter-note pulse on the bass drum and/or hi-hat.
(c) Continue each exercise until each note is clean and definite, and a relaxed, flowing groove is maintained.
(d) Each exercise is to be played again with hands reversed. Example: Left hand on hi-hat or cymbal; right hand on snare.

PART II

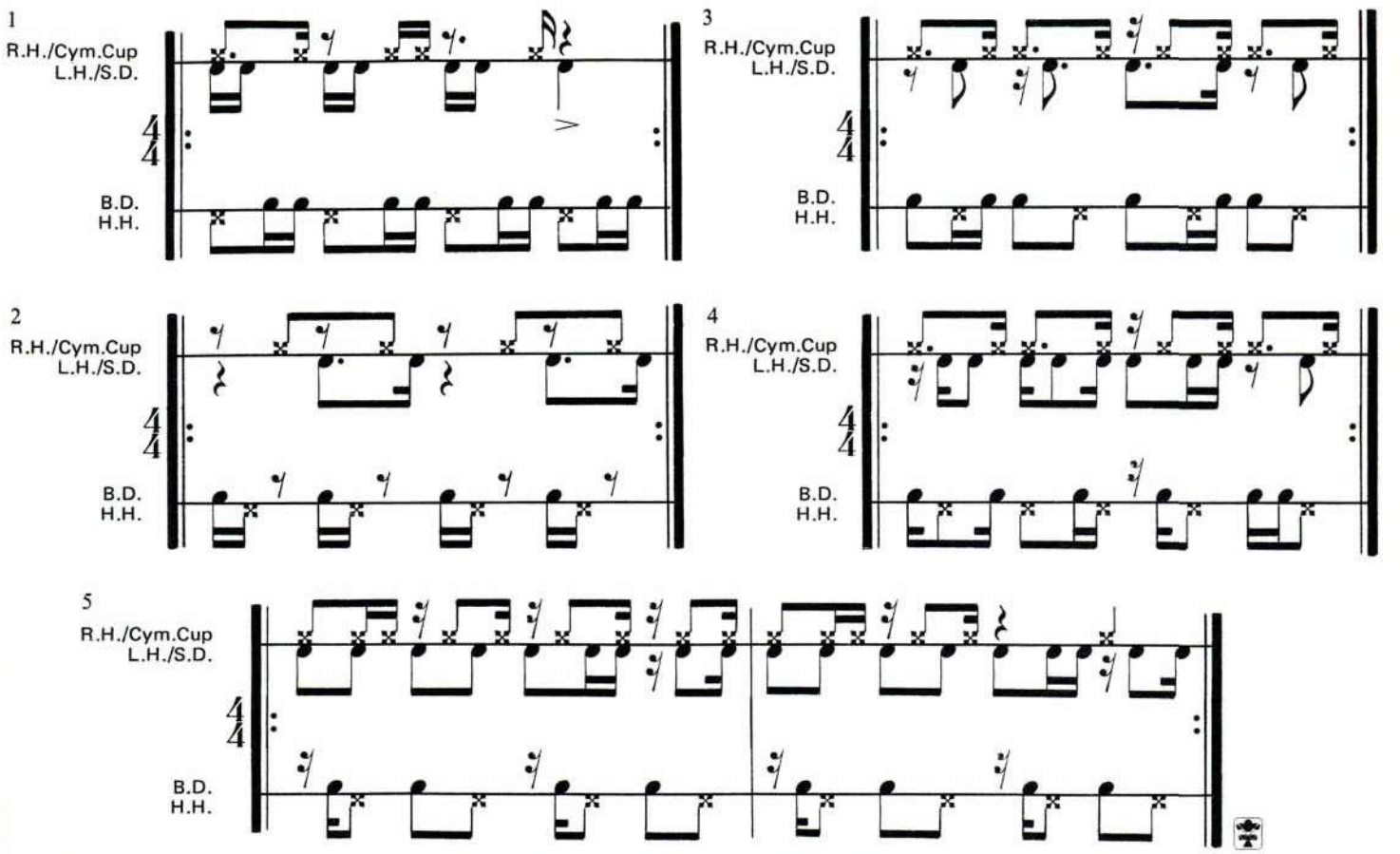
In Part II, the counter-rhythms in each exercise are less constant, and demand more coordination. The same instructions outlined in Part I apply here. Remember, each exercise is to be played again with hands reversed.





PARTIII

The following five rhythms are representative of timekeeping grooves used by fusion drummers. They are practical applications of the techniques developed in Parts I and II. Watch the Stickings closely. Strive towards a smooth, flowing feel.



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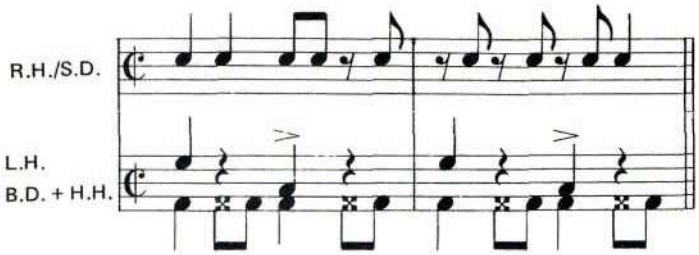
by Norbert Goldberg

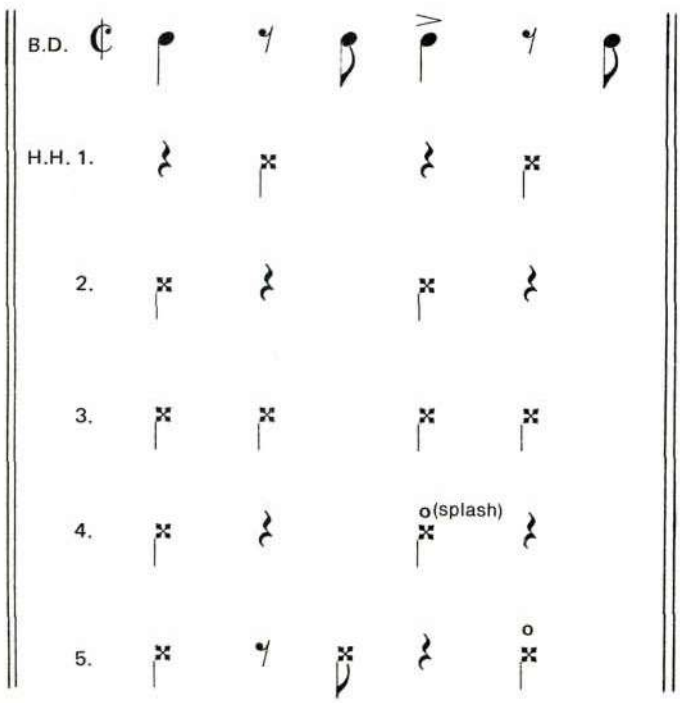
The Sambo

The samba is one of the few South American rhythms that have become widely accepted and integrated in today's music. Although many drummers are quite proficient in playing the samba, there is often a certain quality lacking in their execution. In trying to determine the elements that give the samba an authentic flavor and feel, it seems that the difference lies in accentuation, phrasing, and touch, perhaps the most elusive of qualities in drumming.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, the samba is associated with the large carnival percussion sections or "samba schools." In transferring the rhythm to the drumset, the closest link to the samba school sound is a beat called "samba cruzada" or crossed samba, named for the resulting hand position. This rhythm incorporates the sound of the Brazilian bass drum called surdo, which is played by the left hand on high and low tom-toms. The right hand, using mostly rim shots, plays a typical samba pattern on the snare.



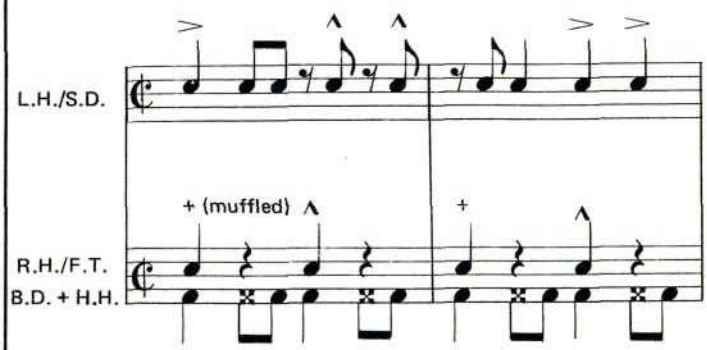
Using the above beat as an example, we can apply some of the elements previously discussed. For instance, the accent on the third beat played on the floor tom is the most important trademark of Brazilian samba, and is doubled by the bass drum and often the bass player as well. Try these foot exercises (first alone, then with the hands) which will heighten your independence. Don't overdo the bass drum accent. Aim instead for a smooth, pulsing effect.



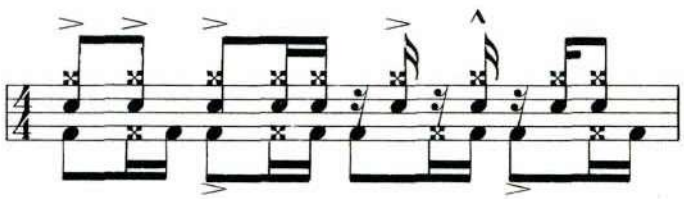
The phrasing of the snare drum is very important and adds to the pulsing quality of the rhythm. Here is the same snare rhythm with some suggestions for dynamic contrast. Play all accented notes as rim shots; play unaccented notes on the edge of the drum. Strive for a light, bouncing stroke. > = slight accent A = strong accent

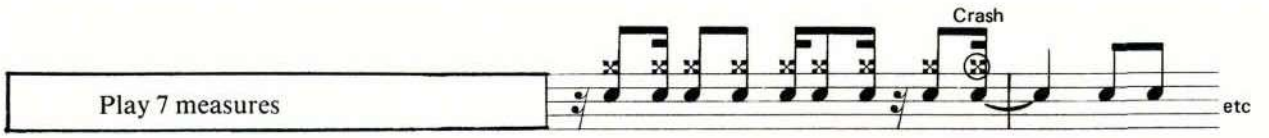
As a general pattern, each measure in the two-bar phrase will either stress the down beat or off beat, alternating between the two. For variations, begin the phrase on each successive beat, i.e., second beat of the second measure.

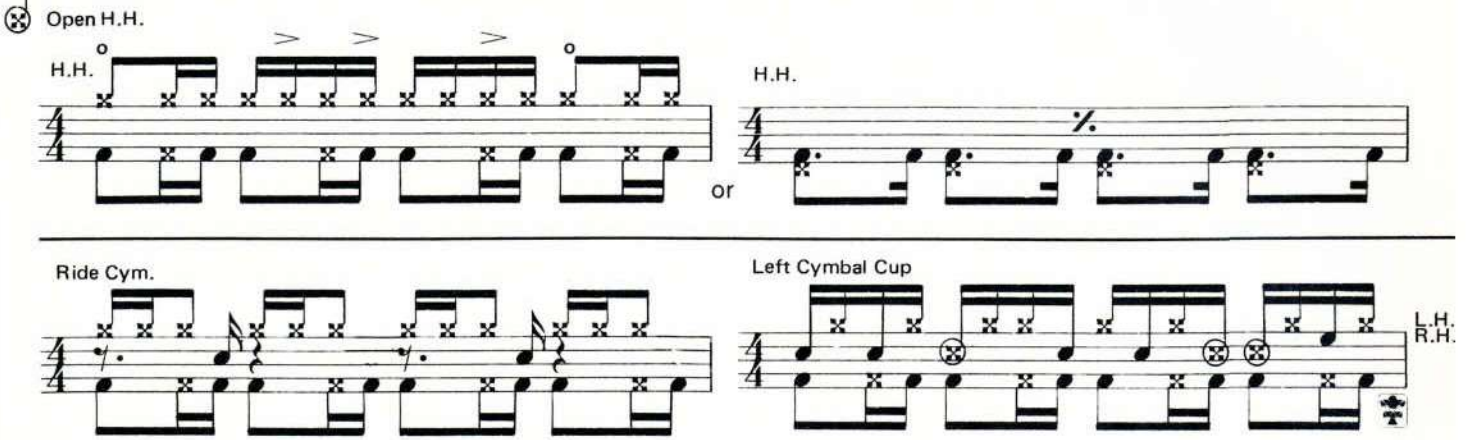
In this version of the samba cruzada, the hands are not crossed over. The right hand, like the surdo, plays open and muffled tones on the floor tom created by striking and pressing the stick into the head simultaneously. The left hand now plays the samba pattern.



The samba cruzada, although mostly used as an effect in solos or when a carnival sound is desired, provides a good foundation for understanding the roots of samba on the drumset. We can now transfer some of the concepts mentioned above to other more functional samba beats. In the following example, both hands play the same figure with unison accents. The left hand can play either on the head or a rim click. This example will be written in one measure instead of two.



A common technique used to punctuate the end of a phrase is to anticipate the down beat with a cymbal crash on the last 16th note and then pick up the rhythm on the second beat of the next measure. The bass drum remains constant.

Some of the newer trends in samba drumming involve combinations with jazz or funk. Sometimes a samba pattern on the hi-hat will provide all the rhythm necessary. Consider the following beats; hopefully they will lead to some innovations on your part.



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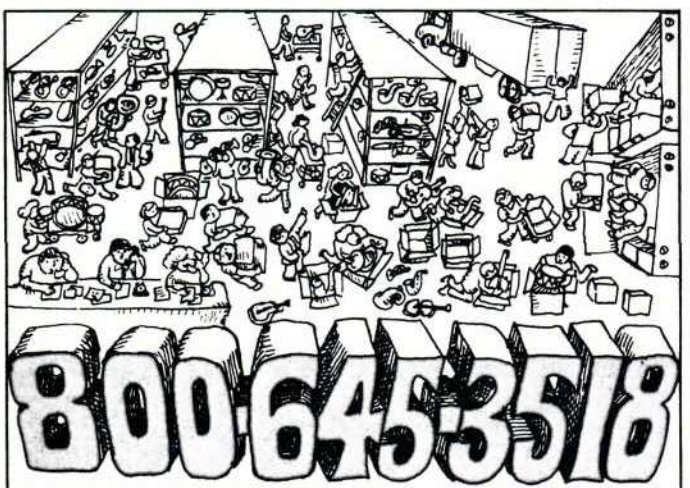

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The makers of educational videotapes are faced with a dilemma: Where do they find artists who are well respected as players, and who also have some background in education? There are a lot of fine drummers out there, but many of them have never done a clinic or given a lesson in their life, and so they are not experienced in explaining what they do. By the same token, there are any number of fine teachers who have such experience, but whose names are relatively unknown—and you need "names" to sell videotapes (or anything else, for that matter). There are a few people, however, who do have credentials as both players and teachers. DCI has found some of these artists, as evidenced by this tape featuring Bernard Purdie.

As a player, Purdie is in the upper echelon of studio players. He was one of the innovators—one of the drummers who other drummers are told to play like. He has also been an active teacher and clinician over the years; his students have included Bruce Springsteen's drummer, Max Weinberg, and Joan Jett's drummer, Lee Crystal. Purdie not only knows what he's talking about; he knows *how* to talk about it.

This tape presents Purdie in a clinic setting. He discusses such topics as working with an engineer, what goes on in the studio, attitude, locking into a groove, and tuning. He also talks a little bit about his own style, and does a good amount of playing—both alone and with a trio. One of the things I like about this tape is that it stays focused on one subject—studio drumming—throughout. Devoting an entire video to a single subject gives the artist a chance to really delve into that subject and examine different aspects of it. The viewer gets more of a feeling of having learned a lot about something. That's what educational video should be about.

Rick Mattingly

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77 **Minutes**

In addition to reviewing the educational videos, we thought we'd take a look at some of the concert videos now available. This new Police tape was an obvious choice for an MD review, as Stewart Copeland has quickly established himself as an influential drummer.

First of all, this is not strictly a concert film. Concert footage from the group's '80-'81 world tour is used as a framework for the film, but a lot of "behind-the-scenes" shots are also included. At first glance, these might not seem as interesting to a musician as shots of the group actually playing. And yet, sometimes we can learn more about why drummers play a certain way by observing their personalities than by just watching their hands. In that respect, certain things do come through on this film—the sense of humor, a certain sarcasm, the curiosity about different cultures, and even Copeland's confession that he's arrogant. When the camera does focus in on his hands, you can see that arrogance in the way he hits the drums.

This videotape, of course, was not just designed for people to study Copeland's drumming. This film is about the Police, and it gives a rounded view of them on and off stage. You get a lot of tape for the money, too.

Richard Egart

DRUM COURSE FOR BEGINNERS
with Louis Bellson
The Video Classroom
165 West 46th Street Suite 705
New York, N.Y. 10036
Price: $59.95 (VHS/Beta)
52 Minutes

Louis Bellson is a giant in the music business. With this video presentation he again proves himself to be a generous and giving person. The tape contains ten lessons that begin with how to hold the drumsticks and progress to introductions on single- and double-stroke rolls, the flam, and the five-stroke roll. Louis, using only a snare drum, moves slowly through these lessons, giving the viewing student ample time to absorb the techniques he is presenting. The student is asked first to listen and observe while Louis plays the rudiments, and then to play along with him. The tape moves from the lessons dealing with technique to lessons on theory and sight reading. The theory lesson is very basic, presenting the parts of the staff, note values and counting, time signatures, and dynamics. The sight reading is also basic, giving exercises in 4/4 and 3/4 time with dynamics and flams. Louis then moves to a four-piece drumset, where he identifies the different drums and cymbals in the set and demonstrates their sounds. He then builds a four-limb rhythm starting with the bass drum on "1" and "3," and adding the hi-hat on "2" and "4," ride cymbal on "1,2,3,4," and snare drum on "2" and "4." Louis changes the ride cymbal rhythm to 8th notes, creating a basic rock rhythm. Then, he changes the ride cymbal rhythm to the broken-triplet jazz rhythm, which he demonstrates in both the two-beat and four-beat feels.

In the final lesson, Louis and the viewing student trade two-bar solos. This is a spot where he could have been tempted to show off his chops, leaving the student confused and frustrated by his complex playing. But Louie sets a moderate tempo and plays a series of simple patterns, which he asks the student to duplicate.

This is a beginner course and is designed for four to six months of repeated viewing. It can be used by schools and teaching studios as supplementary study material, and contains valuable information for beginning students which is not usually found in method books. *Drum Course For Beginners* once again demonstrates the importance of a good foundation. Who better than Louis Bellson to set that example?

Glenn Weber

YOGI HORTON: A HISTORY OF R&B/FUNK DRUMMING
DCI Music Video Inc.
541 Avenue Of The Americas
New York, NY 10011
Price: $69.95 (VHS/Beta)
60 Minutes

The focus of this tape is on an analysis of the different ways drummers have approached funk over the past few years, from the Motown drummers to Steve Gadd. Horton is able to get right to the essence of each style, and explain how and why that style was used. Along the way, he also shows how body movement can be used as an element in one's playing, and he offers some revealing glimpses into the studio world. He also does a *lot* of playing, and the camera is used in such a way that you can see how he's doing what he's doing. I think that the pace of this tape is a bit slow; 10 or 15 minutes could have been edited out without losing any crucial information, and the tape would have moved along a little better. (The Purdie video is a perfect example of a shorter tape which stays right on target throughout.) However, it is better to have too much information than not enough. Yogi Horton may not be as well known as some of the other

people who have made videos, but he has good things to say.

Rick Mattingly

MAX ROACH: IN CONCERT
Axis Video
PO Box 21322
Baltimore, MD 21208
Price: $49.95 (VHS/Beta)
30 Minutes

Axis Video's *Max Roach: In Concert* might just as aptly have been called "The Genius Of Max Roach," for this video, recorded live at the 1982 Kool Jazz Festival in New York, presents sheer genius behind a drumset.

This is not a clinic tape, but rather, a superbly produced drumset "recital" containing a selection of titled drum compositions with recurring themes and variations, each with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end. Pieces like "The Smoke That Thunders," "African Butterfly," "Where's The Wind" and "Drums Unlimited" provide meticulous settings for Max to display his remarkable sense of melodic solo construction with sticks, brushes, mallets—even the ingenuous use of a pedal-operated floor tom. For those so inclined, here is a selection of performances which could be dissected and analyzed for hours to fully appreciate the rich rhythmic and melodic subtleties contained within them.

Two particular moments stand out above the rest: a four-movement odd-time piece that has Max moving ever so gracefully through 3,5,7 and 9, and the finale featuring Max and hi-hat—alone. This dazzling musical statement, played with fire and finesse, is a recurring feature in Max's recent clinic performances which never fails to amaze.

Clearly, *Max Roach: In Concert* is proof positive that Max is *the* master of the drum solo, and the most important jazz drumming figure of the century. Don't be surprised if you find yourself playing it over and over again. This one's for now and forever.

Mark Hurley

ED THIGPEN: ON JAZZ DRUMMING
DCI Music Video Inc.
541 Avenue Of The Americas
New York, NY 10011
Price: $79.95 (VHS/Beta)
60 Minutes

Attending a clinic by a master drummer is a great way to learn, to be inspired, and even to be entertained. There can be a couple of drawbacks, however. First, if the clinic is crowded and you don't get a seat near the front, you might have a problem seeing *how* something is done. Second, there can be so much information crammed into a one-hour presentation that it's difficult to absorb everything all at once. Putting a clinic on videotape solves both of these problems, and that is what DCI has done here.

The main thing this tape has going for it is Ed Thigpen himself. Certainly he has the credentials to do a clinic on jazz drumming. He is also an experienced clinician who is able to communicate his ideas clearly. Here, he shares his thoughts on a variety of subjects, including the function of a drummer, the use of bass drum in jazz, phrasing, playing ahead of, on top of, or behind the beat, the hi-hat, and the use of brushes. There is also plenty of playing on this tape, making the presentation as entertaining as it is informative.

Technically, DCI still has a few problems to overcome—in this case there's a problem with the sound level (although in all fairness it should be pointed out that this was one of the first videos DCI did, and every new company needs a little time to work out all of the bugs). Anyway, that's minor—the good news is that the priorities are straight as far as the visual elements are concerned. When Thigpen is talking and demonstrating at the same time, the camera stays on his hands (or feet) rather than on his face, so you can clearly see *how* he does what he does. This is where a videotape can surpass a clinic situation, because the camera can see things from angles that even the front-row people miss.

There is no denying that videotapes are expensive, and so to justify the cost, the tape must stand up to repeated viewings. I believe that this one does. Specific topics can be isolated and studied, such as the section on brushes (and who better to learn brush playing from than Ed Thigpen?). The concepts are thought provoking, and having the chance to hear these things more than once, over a period of time, is obviously more beneficial than just hearing them once at a clinic. The opportunity to attend an Ed Thigpen clinic should not be missed; the chance to own one should also be considered.

• - . *Rick Mattingly*

Note: In our August On Tape *column, we neglected to mention that the Steve Gadd and Lennie White videos are both 60 minutes long.*

Mitchell continued from page 31

and whatever other activities are going on.

A drummer has to be aware that time-keeping is one of his main functions, whether it be in mainstream, bebop, or avant-garde. Your function is to make sure that the time doesn't move around or go anywhere, so that the other artists won't be misplaced in what they're doing.

SF: Who do you feel are the trend setters in avant-garde drumming?

JRM: Someone who I think was, and still is, is Sunny Murray. Also Beaver Harris, and people like Milford Graves, Michael Carvin, Jerome Cooper and Steve McCall.

SF: I've heard many good things from Sunny Murray, but he's sometimes criticized for not being able to swing.

JRM: To be honest, I don't know if he knows how to. I've never heard him do that. But in terms of setting different moods and putting a lot of undercurrent underneath what the soloist is doing, he's very capable of doing that. But I've never heard him do any swinging, and I've done a few gigs with him in Philadelphia.

With someone like Philly Joe Jones, who's a straight-ahead drummer, you can hear some things where he's playing outside—not like Jerome Cooper, but it is that sense of being outside of the normal structure of what one would allow for the drummer to do.

Elvin Jones' things would be more avant-garde than straight-ahead, to me. He's a forerunner with that whole poly-rhythm thing he uses to set that pace.

With drummers today who are playing in the avant-garde idiom, I don't see them as doing a lot of things, but I still feel that even if you're doing something in the avant-garde category, it should always swing, regardless of how many instruments you have there and how much you're doing. The music should always be swinging. I think Jaki Byard made me very aware of that.

SF: If your students wanted to study the lineage of drum pioneers in avant-garde after Elvin, who do you suggest they listen to?

JRM: I think someone like Jack DeJohnette would be a good example. I'd suggest that the student get out and hear some drummers play live. That gives you a much better sense of what the drummers are really doing. One can listen to some early Ronald Shannon Jackson. I'm not talking about what he's doing today—I'm not that familiar with what he's doing musically—but he was doing some very creative things around the time he was with Ornette Coleman.

There are some Music Minus One records where they have the chart already written out, but the drum part isn't there. You can put in your own drum part. Then they have another section where what you should play is written out. Something like this would give a drummer a variety of ideas to use. That's vitally important in terms of what's going on in music today.

SF: What does your drumset consist of?

JRM: I've never changed my drumset. I've always used Gretsch drums, and I've been playing for close to 20 years. I've got Gretsch sets in New York, Philadelphia and Amherst. The dimensions of my drums vary, but in all instances wood drums are the best because you get more of a natural sound. I'm primarily using calf heads on my snare drum. When I was in California I got a whole new order of Paiste cymbals. Steve McCall turned me on to Paiste. The sound of the Paiste cymbals is so much different than the Zildjians. It's a matter of taste. I picked up two 505 cymbals in California. It's a heavy, beautiful sounding cymbal.

SF: Can you offer any tuning suggestions?

JRM: I tune my drums in fifths. I got that from listening to Max Roach a lot. His drums were tuned in fifths a lot. I also developed that idea from playing timpani in undergraduate school. You can really hear the difference in sound. There's nothing worse than having the bass drum, side tom-tom and mounted tom-tom really tuned, and having your snare drum tuned horribly. The snare is the major drum! Max and Blakey have their drums tuned very well. I also like the way Tony Williams tunes his drums.

SF: What does the future hold for J.R. Mitchell?

JRM: It looks good. I got a lot of good response from people for the artist-in-residence that I recently did at the University of New Mexico. I have really been concentrating a little bit more on writing. That's something I majored in at graduate school, but I haven't really done a whole lot of it. I'm revising music that I've written before, and getting a chance to hear it played. I'd like to get a sextet together. I'd use Byard Lancaster as the sax player, and Calvin Hill is the bass player I'd choose.

I just finished doing a thing at the University of Massachusetts with Walter Davis, Jr. I like him as a pianist. Sonelius Smith is a pianist I've gotten adjusted to; he's very versatile. I've been doing some work with Archie Shepp off and on.

I have a record coming out called *Moving,* with Byard Lancaster on alto and flute, Calvin Hill on bass, and Bob Nelom is on piano on one side. On the other side, Jerome Hunter replaces Calvin, and Justo Amerio is on flute and tenor sax. That's going to be released on Doria Records, my own label. I have another release on Rah Records with a saxophonist named Shamik Farah that has one of my compositions on it. Sonelius Smith is on piano, John Stubblefield on sax, Charles Davis on trombone, and Kyoto Fujiawa is the bassist.

Things are looking a little better, but I guess we always look for it to be a little broader than it is. Jazz should be played in

universities and colleges so you can get to the students who are actually going to be the people who will be the liaison for the music in the future. We should get jazz into the h schools, junior high schools, and even down to the pre-school level. That way, we're educating the kids as they grow up.

The writers of the music that we are representing have to be people who have spent some time with the artists. We have to be able to write about the music so we can get the layman to understand what we're saying.

SF: Again, in *As Serious As Your Life,* Sirone, a bassist is quoted as saying, "We're losing all our front-line players. I'm afraid that in five years' time we won't have any leaders left." The author, Valerie Wilmer, goes on to explain that "Sirone was bewailing the gap left in the musicians' street community by the men who have found sanctuary in the university. Since the introduction of black studies, the American colleges have claimed a number of musicians as lecturers. Guaranteed income and the peaceful environment were very attractive to artists frustrated by the constant rejection of their wares, regardless of whether the academic life had been a part of their original plan." How do you feel about these sentiments?

JRM: She's saying that the musicians are becoming a part of the institution, maybe not even wanting to, but as a means of survival of the system or society. And because of that they maintain that position in the universities rather than lingering in the clubs as they'd done in the past. My decision to go into the university was based in part on the fact that I was doing some playing and making some funds, but I wasn't playing the stuff that I wanted to play. A part-time opportunity came for very little money—an academic opening to teach a jazz course at Northeastern—and so I tried it. Once I became attracted to it—and I was able to pretty much do what I wanted to do in teaching—it seemed like a haven for me to be able to continue to at least function in the musical circle that I wanted to, and still be able to teach and play at the same time. You *do* get drawn into the institution. I know some people who are so into it that it would be very difficult for them to give it up and go back onto the streets. Musicians I know of who are able to do this are Archie Shepp and Max Roach. Jackie McLean has the same sort of arrangement at the University of Hartford. Jaki Byard was able to do it at the New England Conservatory. In response to that portion of Valerie's book, yes, a lot of musicians have taken refuge in the universities, because it's a steady, consistent income and you know from week to week that you have X amount of salary coming in, other than relying solely and totally on performing. There's an advantage to that because when people know that you're just relying on performing, they often take advantage of you. Jackie McLean told me that now he can be very selective in what and where he wants to perform. That's fine. That's the way it should be. Donald Byrd isn't doing a lot of performing now but he was telling me the same thing.

I've played the kind of music Sirone's talking about in lofts and wherever, and it sure sounds good. But you're only playing to two or three people. You survive through just about any means possible. The way it's been in the arts for the last six or seven years, I know musicians who are playing out on the street, which I would never do because of principle. But they're not looking at principle. They're thinking, "Hey, it's money and I don't have any." I don't totally put them down for it. I just have other sources of income that I can go to.

My main thrust and direction right now is that I'm really getting interested in electronic music. Not that the music will be *totally* electronic, but that there will be electronic music in an area where the music will always be able to swing.

Regardless of what type of music we as jazz artists are playing, whether it be classical, folk, rock, R&B or whatever, it should always have the feeling of swinging so that people can tap their feet.

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by Charles M. Bernstein

Photo by Gary Evans Layton

Kwaku Dadey

Kwaku Dadey is the quintessential African master drummer. He comes from a family in Africa that has a rich musical background. There have been master drummers in Kwaku's family for well over five generations. Kwaku is a musician who not only carries on the great traditions taught to him by the masters, but also seeks out and creates new traditions for music and the ancient art of drumming.

In performance, he is a joy to hear, and at the same time, nothing short of astounding. Often Kwaku will play several complex polyrhythms at the same time. However, he does not play to show off his technical proficiency; instead, when Kwaku Dadey plays his drums, they sing melodies which are connected by a beautiful web of rhythmic unity. The best way to describe his personality is to think of a perpetual smile. He is a good-natured man, who truly loves life and respects his fellow man. In short, just being around Kwaku Dadey is pure inspiration.

Kwaku came to the United States in 1968 and settled in San Francisco. In addition to his busy teaching schedule, Kwaku has performed and recorded with Paul Winter, Louis Bellson, John Handy, Quincy Jones, Buddy Rich, and the San Francisco based band, Third World. He has just completed an unpublished book entitled Master Drummer. *The book is based on a story told to Kwaku by his mother concerning an African master drummer in the 1400s.*

The author would like to express his heartfelt thanks to George Marsh for his invaluable advice during the writing of this article.

CB: What is your family background and how were you introduced to African drumming?

KD: I was born in Ghana, West Africa on April 6, 1946. My grandfather was a master drummer and a very powerful man in society. My father was also a master drummer, and a highly acclaimed musician and percussionist in Africa. He brought peace and harmony to the society, and was a very, very strong man in terms of the social structure. My mother was a master folklorist and told stories in the oral tradition. I have four brothers and five sisters, and everybody in the family is musically inclined. My youngest brother is a very good dancer in Africa today.

I started playing drums when I was about three years old, following the example of my father. He would take me to different ceremonies and events, and I would listen to and learn the folklore.

CB: When you were a child, did your parents tell you that you were going to be a drummer, or were you subtly edged into it?

KD: I was kind of edged into it. But it was mostly my decision. My parents saw that I was very interested in the instrument and, even though they disciplined me at times, they still gave me the okay to go ahead.

CB: How important are the drums to African culture?

KD: In Africa the drums are viewed as a mediator between the people and the social structure. There is no occasion during which you would not hear a drum. The drums are viewed as a life force. There are drum pieces about everything—death, life, marriages, fishermen—everything.

CB: What is African classical drumming and how old is it?

KD: Classical African drumming goes way back in time. I would say it's been part of our existence for thousands of years. I presently play classical drumming pieces that are around ten-thousand years old. But there are other pieces that go back even further in time. We have religious music and we have secular music. A lot of the secular music is derived from the religious music. However, all the religious drumming is classical drumming. Masters learned the religious drumming and the process for learning it is always the same. So, classical drumming has always been part of the social foundation. It's timeless.

CB: What is your definition of an African master drummer and how does an individual become one?

KD: Well, in order to become a master drummer, you must first be an apprentice and play for a long time. You then attend the school of drumming and study with traditional masters. Finally, you get to the point where you start performing by yourself and the masters acclaim you. You may not already have a master in your family, but you can elect to go to school to become one. You learn the folklore, the dance, music, religion, traditions, and oral tradition. In a sense, you become a historian. Drumming is a collective art in Africa. There is a sharing of the knowledge, and you make sure that you spread it. You become a wandering minstrel, and like a troubadour, you move from one place to the next, playing, sharing stories. Everywhere you go, you're also learning from the people. You transfer this story here, and it becomes that story over there. You move from one area, take the story the people from that area give you and transfer it over to another area. So, it keeps on moving in a circle.

CB: So in a sense, each master is an innovator.

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by Charles M. Bernstein

Photo by Raymond Ross

Francis Cloy

Francis Clay is one of a handful of drummers who helped to create and define blues drumming. Many rhythm section players get very little recognition for their contributions to the blues and other forms of American music. In the evolution of blues drumming, Francis' contributions come after Fred Below. Francis Clay deserves, and has worked hard for, recognition of his contributions to not only the blues, but also jazz and rock.

In 1957, he joined Muddy Waters' band. During his initial stint with Muddy (1957-61), he created a more modern and swinging approach to blues drumming. It was Francis Clay's drumming on "Got My Mojo Workin'" that helped make it a hit in I960. His approach to blues drumming can best be described as funky, driving but loose, and at all times swinging. When he plays, Francis is an absolute joy to behold. There's always a warm smile on his face, his body movements are fluid, and the rhythms he plays are totally unique.

Francis Clay has been playing drums for over 50 years, and like the song goes, "You Can't Judge a Book By It's Cover. " While he has recorded over 50 albums and 300 singles, these records are all in the blues vein. However, Francis is more than a blues drummer. Before joining Muddy's band, he was a modern jazz player who played with, among others, Jay McShann, Charlie Parker, Gene Ammons, Clifford Brown, Benny Golson, Jack McDuff, and Charlie Shavers.

Francis Clay is a warm, talkative, easy-going, likeable individual who sees beauty in life. At 63, he still has a child-like optimism and love for his instrument that is unshakeable. He was a joy and an inspiration to interview. In the evolution of blues drumming, Francis is a giant and his influence is impossible to measure.

CB: Will you describe your family background?

FC: I was born into a family of musicians. We all played instruments—seven of us children and my mother and father. We played a little bit of everything. We were also involved in what was then called ragtime.

CB: Did you and your family listen to the blues at all?

FC: We weren't allowed to listen to the blues! Blues music was considered downtrodden. You had to be the lowest ebb to even listen to it, and playing the blues was unheard of. At the time, it wasn't for decent people.

CB: At what age did you begin to play the drums?

FC: I had an uncle who was a drummer. When I was five, I kept saying to my parents that I wanted to play the drums. "No way," they kept saying. My parents did not think it was a good instrument. They hated my uncle as a person. He was a real cocky type of drummer, and so my parents didn't want me playing drums. I guess they were afraid that I would become like him. When I was 10 years old, I got a couple of books, a practice pad, and a pair of sticks. Since they still refused to buy me drums, I went to work out in the garage and in the basement where no one could hear me. When I was 14, I joined the orchestra at school. Then my parents realized that I was going to play the drums, so they got me some drums and started to help me. They found a good teacher for me, Argo Walker. Argo played in a lot of big bands. I was amazed to run into him in Chicago in 1946 where he was playing with Elmore James. Argo was strictly a jazz man. I don't know how he got with Elmore James.

CB: Aside from Argo Walker, who else have you studied with?

FC: I studied with Roy Knapp. Louis Bellson and I studied with Roy Knapp at the same time. See, Bellson's from Moline, Illinois, which is the town next to Rock Island. I used to go into his father's music store a lot, but we didn't really meet until we were both in high school. That's because we both used to go out with bands in the summer, come back home in the fall, go to school, and play local gigs.

CB: You're a left-handed player. What sort of problems did you have being a "lefty"?

FC: I've got a mental block. I haven't been able to halfway read while I'm playing. It screwed up my head. Music's not written for left-handed drummers.

CB: Did teachers try to make you play right-handed?

FC: Oh yeah, they tried it. I was playing right-handed at first, but actually I discovered for myself that I was originally left-handed. I did it when I was studying off and on, but it was still confusing as the devil. But I was determined that I was going to make it work. People would say, "That jive drummer can't play this." That's what I heard. I said to myself, "I'm going to learn how to master playing left-handed, before it screws up my head."

CB: What advice do you have for left-handed drummers?

FC: Well, you can't fool the muscles. Nor can you fool your brain and your emotions. It's too much a part of you. You have to flow with whatever's in you.

CB: Which drummers have had the great-

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Dadey continued from page 112

KD: Yeah, yeah. Your drumming style is automatically determined. It comes out. In other words, you can study drumming for 30 or 40 years, and your style becomes a unique part of you. For example, I can play a certain story, and play it differently, yet it has another group's meaning.

CB: George Marsh and Steve Mitchell, among others, have studied classical African drumming with you, and they have applied it directly to the drumset. This is a rather unique learning experience. Could you explain how it's done?

KD: What I do is break the drumset down, and assign a rhythm to each drum in the set that otherwise four or five drummers would be playing. It not only becomes a polyrhythm, but it also becomes a rhythm that sings.

CB: Could you explain this concept further?

KD: A rhythm that sings means that when you play the drum, you are attaining three basic elements—rhythm, melody and harmony. This is the concept that I apply to the trap set. Basically, one person is sitting there doing all those things; in short, you have multiple rhythms which consist of a basic rhythm played by the bass drum and the other rhythms which are added over the basic rhythm. Every drum is playing something different, but there is a unity that binds the whole.

CB: If I may regress for a moment, the concept "a rhythm that sings" is a bit foreign to the western world. In this culture, we are taught to separate the terms "rhythm" and "melody." What you're saying is that rhythm and melody are not separate, but instead they are one and the same.

KD: Yeah. If we look at rhythm as a process of infinity, which it is, there is constancy of rhythm everywhere and in everything that is around man. From my African point of view, there is no separation between language and music. It's all one.

African language is very musical and we have used the drums as a communicative instrument for thousands of years. The drum is built on our language, and language has rhythm, melody and harmony. If the language has those elements, then the drum can attain them. In other words, if the language is musical, it thereby has harmony to it, and if I transfer the language onto the drum, I should attain harmony.

CB: Would you say that because the African dialects are more rhythmic than say, English, they are easier to transfer onto the drums?

KD: Yes, that's the way I teach. When I teach trap drummers, I show them single rhythms, and to me that means a polyrhythm. I want my students to know what the motion of a polyrhythm is, whereby the snare drum is playing a call and response with the bass drum, the bass drum is playing a call and response with the floor tom, the hi-hat is playing a call and response with the snare, and so on and so forth.

Language is, of course, very important to drumming. We're looking at a society where the drums are highly respected. You carve a drum in such a way that you communicate with the drum. You can ask the drum to play language for you, and the drum will play language as you're playing it. There are multiple forms of language, and each language has a musical connotation to it. There's no separation between the language and the drum. This is a very important concept to me, and I think drummers should become aware that as they're playing and getting into the polyrhythmic tone of drumming, they'll find out that they just don't stand behind the drum; they *are* the drum. And that's when the flow begins, because they hear the language and they're hearing the drum.

CB: Could you define the term "polyrhythmic tone"?

KD: Polyrhythmic tone is built on the language, and the folklore is based on the tonality of the language. Everything that you play has been tuned to the language and the flow.

CB: How divergent are the techniques for drumming in Africa? Do they vary from tribe to tribe?

KD: There are differences in the various social structures. For example, you have the Ashanties, Ewes, Fons, and Yoruba peoples, and they all have different forms of the houses (schools of drumming). In other words, they all have different ways of playing the drums. Some tribes will emphasize one particular drum over the other drums. For instance, the Atompan drums, which are the big mama and papa drums, are used extensively by the Ashanti. On the whole, in Africa, people use all the drums but they emphasize different ones.

CB: Is there any written notation in Africa for its traditional music, or is the music learned in the oral tradition.

KD: Since ancient times, this music has always been learned in the oral tradition, with one generation passing it on to the next. I'm beginning to notate some of the pieces, but it takes quite a long time to do that and put a book out. If I can do it piece by piece, then I'll be able to get some things published.

CB: I imagine that it's quite difficult to transfer some pieces into western notation, because certain subtleties of the music don't translate at all.

KD: That's right. You miss some things. I've always liked the concept of the way Africans teach. They teach you not only how to play, but also how to hear the music. Listening is very important. One of the best ways to play is to listen and think. As you're playing you think, and the music comes out of your hands. Hesitation is not very advisable.

CB: Steve Mitchell mentioned that you

once told him, "If you have to count it, then it's not worth playing." Is that statement correct?

KD: When you are counting and trying to play at the same time, the whole flow of the rhythm is not the same. What you want to do is get yourself in the position where you don't think about the rhythm—it just comes, and you are with the rhythm. A lot of students spend too much time trying to count and read, and they lose a lot of the feeling. If you break time into too many particles, putting it back together is always rough.

CB: At the present time, are you teaching any courses?

KD: Aside from private lessons, I'm also teaching in the non-western program at San Francisco State University. I just finished teaching a 15-hour seminar, and next semester, I'll be teaching two courses. One course is entitled "Percussion of West Africa." It will cover the origins, polyrhythms, time signatures, harmonies, and religion of that region—the whole spectrum. The other course will be on the music and dances of Africa. It will cover not only the percussion of West Africa, but also the influence African music has had on other cultures, such as Brazil and America. It will be a very involved course. I'll also be assisting in another course that deals with the music of North Africa.

CB: Do you see any drawbacks in the way that music is taught in the West, particularly in the teacher-student relationship?

KD: I think there should be more communication between teachers and students. Students have come to me and remarked that some of their teachers were not communicating with them. Some teachers would just give them their lessons and send them on their way.

That's not a good attitude to have if you're teaching someone to play the drums. Drummers communicate, and communication is particularly important in a learning situation. The student and the teacher should always communicate. When I first started to study the drums, if my teachers had not shared their time and knowledge with me, I wouldn't have learned as much as I did learn. Sometimes my lesson would be over, but they would have me stay with them so that we could not only talk about drumming, but other things as well.

CB: How would you define your teaching philosophy?

KD: My teaching philosophy is that I not only become a teacher to the student, but I also become the student's friend. I not only talk about drumming with my students, but I also discuss life with them.

CB: Could you also elaborate on your philosophy of playing the drums?

KD: There are several aspects to my philosophy. When I sit down and begin playing, I try to avoid having any external problems. I try to solve them before I play. Sometimes I meditate. I try to understand the problem, and by understanding it, I can usually solve it. Sometimes I meditate for hours at a time. The purpose of playing is to get out of yourself and be part of the whole experience. So I try to avoid external problems because they affect me internally and hinder my movement in terms of playing.

Also, sometimes I won't eat until I finish playing. Louie Bellson told me that he has to eat three hours before a gig, and I immediately understood his statement. I like to play when I'm light. I don't like too much weight on me when I play.

I also tell people not to play the drums when they are mad, because you play drums in order to bring about happiness and goodness. When you are playing, you try to go from the dimension you are in to a higher level.

Also, if you play the drums, you should learn something about all the different types of drums, because drums are all related. Knowing about the relatives is always important. I've had a lot of trap drummers come to me to learn conga drums. In the process, even though they were using their hands instead of sticks, they could transfer what they had learned onto the drumset. It's like a tree with many branches. It's one tree, but each branch has something that feeds the other.

CB: Do you think that there is more communication among drummers than among musicians who play other instruments?

KD: I think so. I'm not being biased, but I think that it is easier for drummers than it is for other types of musicians to form friendships with each other.

CB: Over the years, I've noticed that drummers share a communal feeling and generally do not compete with each other.

KD: Competition and greed do not belong in drumming because they limit the learning process. The more you share, the more you get back in return. However, I'd still like to see more communication.

CB: Whenever I've seen you perform, I've noticed that your technique in playing the congas is not only unique, but different from the Afro-Cuban technique. Could you describe these differences?

KD: In the type of drumming I learned, the hand strokes are totally different from Afro-Cuban hand strokes. The way I attain a "pop," flam, or something similar is totally different from the Afro-Cuban technique. I don't lift my hand as high, yet I can get my sound out. Also when I'm playing, I don't play with a lot of force because of the polyrhythmic aspect and the fact that I'm utilizing all of my hand. The way I play is, in part, a result of my natural ability. Also, my uniqueness is the result of what I have learned from many masters.

CB: How many masters have you studied with?

KD: Twenty. And each master had an individual style. One thing they all helped me with was utilizing my own style of playing. They all knew my style. If I were to go to Ghana today and play, they would know who I was by my playing style. It's my own sound and it's a gift.

CB: As an African, how do you perceive and define the influence of Africa on jazz drumming?

KD: Africans have always played jazz. When you have a drummer, a vibe player, which in Africa we call a Balofon, and a cowbell player, you have jazz. However, I define jazz as a direct American product. Jazz as we know it today is American. But the influence of jazz is African. Some people might ask, "How can you view it in that way?" When I look at the music of Brazil, Cuba, and the Carribean, there are places in these areas that speak African languages. The common denominator of those areas is the religious base which has

brought in the African heritage. While it's true that the music belongs to the individual country, the heritage of the music is African. It's the same thing with jazz.

Jazz is spiritual and it's from the heart. It allows for improvisation, and it is not like a clean-cut rhythm where you just play 4/4. In short, jazz allows you to improvise and put the individual heart in the music.

CB: At the present time, what's the state of music in Africa?

KD: Even though Africa has contributed a lot in terms of music, the African people are now getting back a lot of music from different countries. High-life music is still popular. However, today American music is doing very well in Africa. Brazilian music is now getting into Africa and Afro-Cuban music has always done well there. So, there is mutual trading on a musical level going back and forth between Africa and other countries. But, the traditional music never changes.

CB: Is the American drumset used very much in Africa?

KD: Yeah. It's used in the secular music like high-life and dance music. In these types of music, the American drumset is heavily emphasized. However, it's hard sometimes for Africans to obtain the instrument. Sometimes drummers have to go to Europe to get it. Otherwise they have to wait a long time if they order the set, and the cost is high because of the import tax.

CB: I recently obtained a copy of your album entitled *Kwaku Dadey.* I found it to be an interesting album, not only because Louie Bellson was playing on it, but also because of the way you were influenced by a variety of cultures. What are your feelings about the record?

KD: There is a long story about this record. It sprang from an idea that came to me while I was with Paul Winter doing an album called *Common Ground.* \ was teaching his rhythm section, and at that time, I started to put my ideas into perspective. On the album I had 65 musicians and I used different choirs, including preschool children.

I've lived in different countries, and have been influenced by their different social structures and cultures. I've lived in Switzerland, England, Italy, Australia, and in this country. I would say that music is the inverse of language; it has no boundaries. What I've tried to do is put out an album about heritage. Basically, it has a lot to do with my heritage and using different frameworks of the things I have learned or acquired in my existence.

CB: What is it about the drum that makes it special to you?

KD: It's life. Like I always say, if you're listening to music and there is a great drummer playing, and his playing doesn't move you, then there is nothing that will move you. It's a life force. The drum is a strong foundation in music. The drum is a heartbeat. Sometimes I think very deeply about that idea. The drum is part of me, and I play a call and response with the drum.

Clay continued from page 113

est influence on you?

FC: The first drummer that drove me crazy and really woke me up to the drums was the late Chick Webb.

CB: What was it about his playing that really knocked you out?

FC: It was mainly the cues he used for the band and the figures he played in unison with the band. I guess that's what influenced me to become a more melodic drummer. On his recordings he is just playing straight, but on stage he used to shine.

CB: What other drummers influenced you?

FC: Well, there have been a number of them. However, "Specs" Powell and George Wettling were great drummers. "Specs" was what you'd call the perfect drummer. George was also, but "Specs" had more of a hip type of thing than George Wettling.

CB: Wasn't "Specs" Powell a straight-ahead bebop player who came out of the swing school?

FC: Right, he had versatility in his style. Almost anyone that's really playing came out of the swing era. Within that style of playing, you had so many people doing their own thing.

During the late '30s and '40s, every city had its "strip." You could walk or drive down the "strip" and you could distinguish each band as you passed by. You could also tell who the soloists were without seeing them, because they had their own unique styles. If you copied someone, you would be laughed off the stage, and no one would hire you.

CB: It seems like the '30s produced some great drummers.

FC: Back in those days, there were only a handful of kids playing drums—Sonny Greer, Jo Jones, Cozy Cole and James Crawford. They all coached me along the way. They'd say, "Look, can you do this? Do it this way." They would take some time with me.

CB: Which musicians, other than drummers, influenced you?

FC: Bird was my greatest influence by a long shot. Later on in life, there were people like Benny Golson and Charlie Shavers who influenced me a great deal. Charlie's a sweet little cat. He played so much more than Louis Armstrong.

CB: In an earlier conversation, you mentioned that you worked with Charlie Paker. When did you play with him?

FC: That was in the old Jay McShann band, which was my first big band, in 1939 or 1940.

CB: How old were you when you played with Jay McShann?

FC: I was 16 when the Jay McShann band came through town. Gus Johnson had been in an accident, so they asked me to work in his place. Later I played with the circus and local carnivals. The circus was pretty groovy. I also worked on an old river boat, the S.S. Idlewilde, going up and down the rivers.

CB: What other musicians did you work with?

FC: I worked with Jimmy Bell, a piano player. He had a good band. I also played with Boyd Atkins at the Faust Club in Peoria. We did a lot of stage shows.

Right before going with Muddy Waters, I worked with Gene Ammons and later King Kolax, a trumpet player. He always had one of the best bands around Chicago. When Benny Golson and Clifford Brown teamed up, they used to come and sit in with the band I was playing with. I had some sessions with them you wouldn't believe. The three of us would look into each other's eyes and cook.

CB: Before joining Muddy Waters, did you play with other blues musicians?

FC: Before playing with Muddy, I had never played down home blues in my life. I mean, I did for a little while, but it was a different thing. I had played with George Smith, a harmonica player, but he played more of a swing type of blues. He also did some jazz things. We played a different type of shuffle than the type I played in Muddy's band.

CB: First, how did you become involved with Muddy Waters, and second, did you have any musical difficulties in making the transition from playing jazz to blues?

FC: In 1957, things were slow around Chicago and I was packed up and ready to go back to New York. A friend of mine said that Muddy needed a drummer at Gleason's House of the Blues in Cleveland. I said, "I'll take it. I'm going that way anyway, and then I'll go on home from there." So the band picked me up and we opened at Gleason's. We had no rehearsals. They led off with their theme song, and it seemed like they went that way and I went this way. It took us about two days to start feeling each other out. Muddy showed me that all you have to do is make that funky slap. I think he started out playing the drums. He taught me all I know about the blues, because I didn't have the faintest idea what they were doing. So about the third night we started cookin' together. I started listening closely to what they were doing and following them. After we finished the two weeks, we had the place in an uproar.

CB: Did it really take you two weeks to adjust?

FC: No, no, it only took two or three nights for us to really get together. Muddy said, "I don't know what you're playing, but it feels and sounds good. I want you to stay with me until I can get a blues drummer." The band started cookin' and I ended up staying with him for about four years at that time.

CB: That would be from 1957 to 1961.
FC: Yeah, later I went back with him steady from 1965 to 1967. Years ago, we were the only blues band out on the road. We were the first, while the rest of them were sittin' on their hands playing those little store-front clubs in Chicago. We were out there on the road touring all through the Midwest, the East and through the South, twice a year—at planting time and harvest time because those were the only times that anyone had any money.

We used to have some of the most intense arguments. We didn't agree on anything. Either I'd quit or Muddy would fire me, but he always wanted me to come back. And he'd say, "I'm going to get you back in the band if it kills me." Then he'd say, "Are you ready to come back now?"
CB: Aside from Muddy Waters, what other blues artists have you worked with?
FC: I worked with Buddy Guy and Junior Wells, but I turned down jobs with Little Richard and Albert King. When a band leader doesn't treat musicians with the respect and love that they should have, I don't care to be a part of that band.
CB: Over the years, who has been your favorite musician to work with?
FC: Charlie Shavers because we didn't have to talk. He knew what I was gonna do and I knew what he was gonna do. You can feel it when it's right. It's magic and it only happens with certain players. You don't have to do all this rehearsing over and over again. You just have to have the right musicians. Forget your friends when it comes to music. Just get the right kind of musicians who think and feel as you do.
CB: Then it just sort of melds together.
FC: Right. There's no explanation. That's explanation enough!
CB: What was your most memorable musical experience?
FC: It was my first concert at Carnegie Hall with Muddy in 1958. The reason I consider it my most memorable experience goes beyond just the prestige of playing Carnegie Hall. All the arguments that occurred within the band ceased right there because of the astonishing acoustics. You couldn't hear yourself or the other members of the aggregation. You could only rely on what you knew.
CB: And instinct.
FC: Yeah, and counting your butt off. The band watched me count and the arguing stopped. All the arguments they were giving me were to save their own face, and I understood that from then on. That's when I stopped arguing with them. I awakened to my own feelings.

There was something else about Carnegie Hall. Muddy had never heard of Carnegie Hall. He said, "There's this big ol' hall in New York." I mean, where would a blues man from Mississippi have heard of Carnegie Hall? He said he couldn't remember the name of it, so I named some different places. And he said, "No, it's not any of those places." So finally I asked, "It wouldn't be Carnegie Hall, would it?" and he said, "Yeah, yeah, that's it." I said, "Oh my God." But he responded, "I don't think I'm gonna take it because there's not much money in it." So I had to lay out the importance of the gig and what it would do for his career.

Just before Muddy was invited to Carnegie Hall, things started getting big. European magazines, like *Jazz Hot* in Paris and *Blues Unlimited* in London, were taking notice of Muddy and the band. But we didn't realize it because Muddy couldn't even meet these writers when they came over to the States. We gained the attention when we played at a club called Smitty's Corner on 35th and Indiana in Chicago. Before we played there, it had been a jazz club. I had played there a couple of times before, and the place was about to fold. So, the management thought they'd try the blues because there were a lot of black people in the south side of Chicago. Anyway, we had that joint packed, every night, six nights a week. We had them lined up two blocks down Indiana Avenue and two blocks on 35th Street waiting to come in. And that's how we got all the attention.
CB: Tell me about the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival.
FC: A couple of years after Carnegie Hall, we were invited to do the Newport Jazz Festival in 1960. Muddy didn't want to take that gig either. He had never heard of the Newport Jazz Festival. So, again, I had to go through the whole routine. The album we recorded there was what caused the blues to explode all over the world. That's what made us the forerunners of everyone else.
CB: Although Muddy had recorded "Got My Mojo Workin'" several years before,

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it didn't become a hit until you recorded it with Muddy at Newport.

FC: Muddy told me that it was S.P. Leary, and not Elgin Evans, who made that first recording. All he did was a "hands off" rhythm all the way through the tune. But, the earlier version wasn't a big seller.

CB: Why do you think the version of "Mojo" you played on became a hit?

FC: Well, I did a lot of work with the band before we even got to Newport. Since I saw the potential in that number, I told Muddy this could be a heck of a production number. He said, "Go on and play your thing." I had to sneak in things that the band members didn't recognize. They didn't even know that I was putting them in there until they got the feeling of it, and then they were comfortable with it. I kept telling those cats, "Look, play it this way. Give it a different twist. It will sound more professional. It'll make us tighter." Finally, they decided that it was cookin'.

CB: You used the term "hands off" rhythm. Would you explain what that term means?

FC: I play the "hands off" rhythm with some of the notes open and some of them closed, by muffling the snare drum head with my hands. I hit the stick with two beats closed and just two beats on the head—open. I play the notes when I'm pressing down.

CB: It sounds very similar to one of the old rhumba rhythms in which the left stick is resting horizontally down on the snare drum with the butt end of the stick overhanging the rim, and the right stick is playing muffled rim shots.

FC: Right, right, it's similar to the old Latin rhythms.

CB: What advice do you have for a drummer in a blues band?

FC: Lay the structure down, and if it's in taste, play the fill-ins. Sometimes it's best to leave it open. Also it's important to cue others in and out of the chords with taste so that they'll know where they're at. And always know where the first beat of every measure is. That's the most important point of all. You don't always have to play it, but know where it's at. You shouldn't get lost for more than one measure.

Learn all you can about music, particularly the blues, and go with your feelings. I learned the most about playing the blues while touring through the South and those old road houses. The drummers were just sitting there drunk, half asleep, and slapping that funky beat. They had that foot going. That's all they were playing, and that's the basis of the blues. Make your blues drumming funky and at the same time alive. Not all blues are "down." There are happy blues. You can take a happy blues, build it to a perpetual thing, drive it to a frenzy, and then you can drive it right through the wall. You don't start off driving. You start out swinging because if you start out at the top, where is there left to go?

CB: Fred Below has been described as the father of Chicago blues drumming. Would you describe his contribution to the blues?

FC: He made a large contribution to the blues. Like myself, he too was playing modern jazz before going with Little Walter. Below layed down a whole new concept of drumming the blues that no one else had played before. I personally felt that he had too strong a touch of the military in his playing. That's because he played in a military band in the armed forces.

CB: How do you define your contribution to blues drumming?

FC: I changed it around and made it more of a swinging type of thing. I thought that the blues should have more of a jazz feeling to it. So I created a more modern style without the military effect. At the time, I was just trying to make it work. I didn't know we were giving birth to a whole dynasty. Muddy and I used to crack up when we'd talk about that. We didn't know all this was going to happen. We were just trying to work it out and trying to keep going. Mainly I was trying to make the blues sound more professional than the informal styles of music, such as country & western and bluegrass.

CB: How important is the influence of jazz and blues drumming on rock drumming?

FC: Well, most rock is an extension of the blues, and along with jazz, it is the basis of rock drumming. I find that most blues or rock drummers who can really play come from the school of jazz.

CB: After playing for over 50 years, you've seen an amazing amount of change in music and drumming. Do you have any thoughts on the state of drumming?

FC: In an article I wrote once, I advised drummers to learn the ropes and get all the experience they can. Forget about the money and being a star—that's for the birds. It has nothing to do with one's art. After you have learned everything you can, and have mastered your instrument and yourself, then, and only then, are you allowed to break the rules in order to create. In other words, stop trying to play like someone else. I used to copy other drummers when I started out. That's what made me know I could do other things. Then I knew I could just be myself, be original, and create a style of my own. I did it in modern jazz and later in the blues. Just be yourself and stop copying records. Learn the song or melody, the chords if possible, and then start to think about how you would do it.

CB: Sometimes, when you come up with an original musical or drumming approach, the audience or musicians might not understand it right away.

FC: That's the story of my life! But it don't bother me as long as I know it adds up. You see, I never accepted anyone's opinion of my playing over my own.

CB: It's a funny thing, but you've probably influenced a lot of drummers and they're probably not even aware of your influence.

FC: People have been stealing my material and ideas for years. I'll give you a hint about one of my ideas. I used to do a lot of solo work when I was working the Kitty Kat Club in Chicago in '52. The bandstand was a little stand behind the bar. Anyway, a lot of times when I soloed and opened it up with single-stroke rolls, I would drive the people crazy. So instead of that, I started doing press rolls and I whispered them. That's when a lot of drummers started copying it.

CB: You have a youthful outlook on life. Would you say that drumming is your fountain of youth?

FC: Partially. You see, if there's something you really want to do and you love your art, don't mess up your personal life, or your body, or get a big head. When I was quite young, I saw excellent musicians die from drugs and get all fouled up because of booze. I swore then that it would not happen to me. Whatever I play, it's going to be me, and not the drugs or whiskey talking.

Music is a gift. God gave me life, these hands, and this mind. The only way I can repay Him is with what I give back to Him. I do that by practicing good morals and principles. I love the beauty in life and don't need all this negativity. I don't know why some people who are in the arts stay depressed and lonesome. I've never been lonesome a day in my life! I've always got so much to look forward to. I can't get enough done. It's been that way my whole life. There's so much beauty in the world. I see all the ugliness, but I'm not going to get down there with it. Some people call me a legend, and that still embarrasses the hell out of me. I can't handle that one. It makes me feel like I'm dead. There are a whole lot of things I'd still like to create. I still feel like I'm a young man. I don't feel old and that's in spite of my six great grandchildren.

CB: Any last thoughts on the art of drumming?

FC: Yes. Live it, eat it, and breathe it. Never forget that you're a drummer. You've got to protect your mind, your hands and your body. If drumming is your life, you have to live it all the way. I don't mean that you have to be arrogant. We've got enough fools in the world. Perform your music with love because what you play comes out you.

Drumming has given me a sense of pride, because I've always been my own person and I never wanted to be like anyone else. I admire a lot of people, but I never wanted to be them. I just wanted to be myself. I want to feel what I feel and not what someone else feels. I take great pride in that. Drummers should just be themselves, get across their feelings, and try to make people visualize what they're playing within a given style, mood or song. You can paint a picture with the drums. You can tell a story and if you play the drums right, you get your message across.

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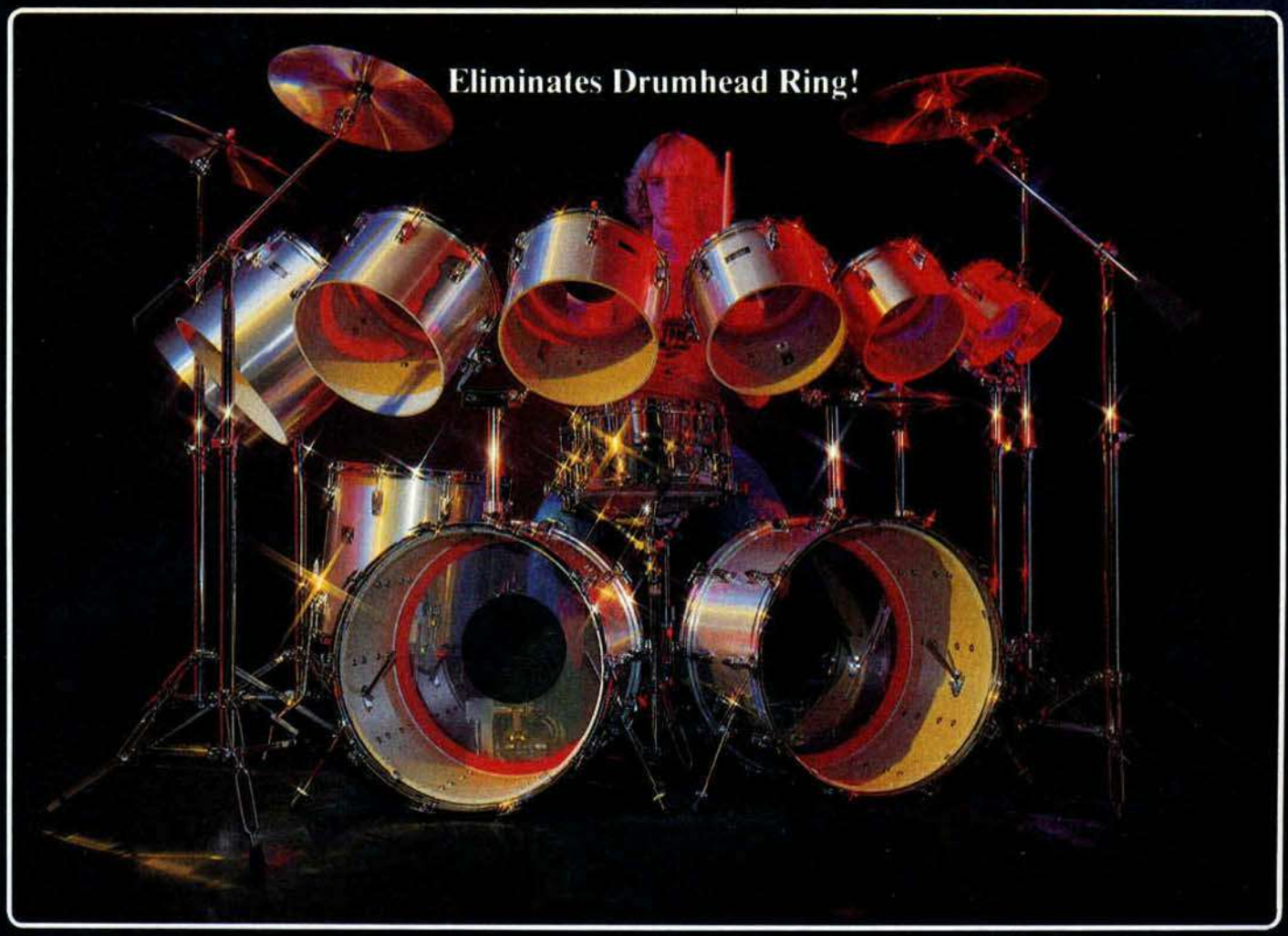

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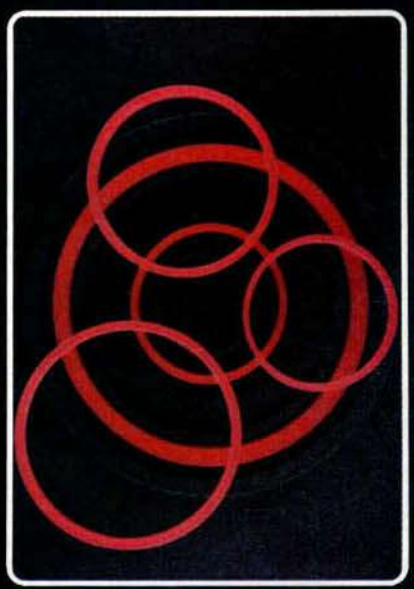

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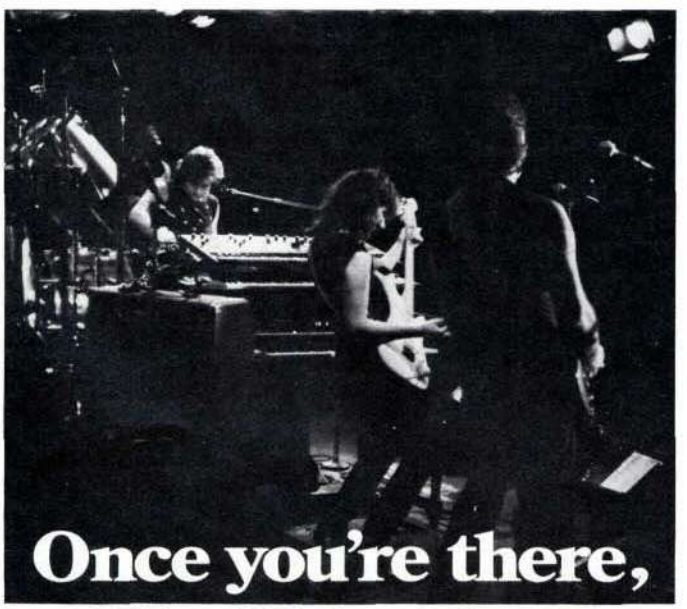

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by Scott K. Fish

Q. Me, my brother and our cousins are trying to start a band. I'm having a hard time finding the drum music to most of the big hits. What would you say I try?

D.G.
New Carlisle, OH

A. We would suggest that you try what thousands of drummers have been required to do: listen and transcribe the hits yourself. How detailed the chart will be depends on what it is you are trying to extract from a tune; structural overview, or copping licks, fills or beats. The obvious advantage in transcribing is that repeated, bar-by-bar listening will give you an unparalleled familiarity with the structure of a tune. A written chart is generally considered to be a road map—a framework over which a drummer stretches his own interpretation of the music, guided by written cues such as repeat signs, time signatures, bridge to chorus designations, band figures and the like. If you write the framework down yourself, it will be so embedded in your head that you'll probably only need the written music as a reference. Additionally, the more you write, the sharper your reading skills become. This is one of the concepts behind dictation. You can also use piano, guitar or horn parts to read from if you want to get a picture of how a tune is set up.

Q. Is it better to play the bass drum with the heel of the foot on the pedal or with it raised?

M.M.B.
Twin Falls, ID

A. There's no one better way. Generally, playing with the heel raised is used when you need more power, or for accenting.

Q. I'm interested in buying a drumset, but it's hard for me to kick out that kind of money all at once. My partner suggested I buy a piece at a time. Where can I buy drum parts where I can put them on layaway?

J.G.
Carson City, NV

A. Most drum shops will agree to a layaway plan. It might cost a bit more to buy this way however. We'd suggest finding the names, addresses and/or phone numbers of some local drum shops. Explain your situation to them and see what kind of a deal can be worked out.

Q. I bought a full set of Evans' *Hydraulic* heads. I used them for two weeks and switched to Remo coated *Ambassador* heads. I stored the Evans in boxes in a closet. A couple of months later, I wanted to switch back to the Evans and some of the heads would not fit on the shells. It seems the plastic molded part had turned inward and would no longer go on the drum. Any suggestions?

T.S
San Diego, CA

A. A spokesman for Evans stated that the head hoop on the Evans' heads is plastic. Other companies—like Remo—use metal on these hoops. The Evans' heads will mold themselves to the shape of the drum. Unless a drum is perfectly round, it will be difficult to remount the heads. The spokesman suggested leaving your heads in the sun or in an oven at about 100 degrees. This will soften the hoops. Put them on the drums and tension them above normal tuning. Let them stand overnight. In the morning, retune them. If you are planning on removing them again, make sure to mark the heads and the rim of your drum so that you will be mounting the exact same head on the exact same drum, in the exact same position.

Q. I've learned that polyrhythm means two or more different rhythms within the same time signature, and that polymeter means two or more different time signatures at the same time. Am I wrong or does it just depend on how the composer decides to write the phrase?

S.P.
Ontario, Canada

A. The Harvard Dictionary of Music *defines "polyrhythm" as ''the simultaneous use of strikingly contrasted rhythms in different parts of the musical fabric." The term "polymetric," according to the dictionary "would be reserved for the simultaneous use of different meters. "*

Q. I use both traditional and matched grips. It seems to me that when I practice one way, the other improves as well. Does this happen by chance or is there proof that practicing traditional grip improves matched and vice versa?

W.D.
River Edge, NJ

A. The merits of traditional and matched grips have been debated forever, it seems. If you find that practicing both grips aids you in playing both ways, then it obviously works for you. I'd say that today's general consensus among drummers is that both grips have their strong points and weaknesses, and probably very few players would discourage you from using either/or both grips.

Q. I have cymbals that I've never heard of before. They are called UFIP cymbals. Please tell me what they're worth, what they're made of and anything else you know about them.

M.G.
Auburn, KS

A. UFIP cymbals are manufactured in Italy. They've been in production for 100 years, and the initials stand for Unione Fabbricanti Italian/ Piatti (Italian Cymbal Manufacturers Association). You can write lo them for information and/or a catalog at this address: UFIPs.r.l., POBox59, 51100 Pistoia, Italy, ViaG. Calilei, 20.

Q. When a drummer overdubs on a song in the studio, how does the band play the song live on stage?

W.S.
Liberty, PA

A. This depends greatly on how complex the overdubbing is. Sometimes when drummers refer to overdubbing, they mean that they recorded over an original drum track that they or another drummer did beforehand. Some drummers will record with the drumset and then go back and overdub percussion. Other drummers will overdub drumfills or cymbal crashes. If the overdubbing isn't too extensive, it will be easy for a drummer to duplicate it on stage. There are times when a band will add another drummer or percussionist to play what they originally overdubbed on the record.

Q. How can I get information on attending a clinic?

W.S.
Liberty, PA

A. There are several ways to do this. One way would be to contact the drum company if your favorite clinician is endorsing a particular drum. The companies usually take part in the clinic, so they most often know when and where their endorsers are appearing. Another idea is to contact the major drum shops nearby who offer clinics. Sometimes they'll have mailing lists that you can register for. Often you can find ads for drum clinics in regional music or art-related publications.

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by Robyn Flans

It's back to the Nitty Gritty for the group that has been known only as the Dirt Band for the past few years. Original member **Jimmie Fadden,** who played drums for the group from 1968 until about six years ago, is, as he puts it, "back in the saddle again. Originally when I stopped playing drums, it was for the sake of group visibility in that I was one of the original remaining members and everyone felt it best that I be down front playing guitar and harmonica. 1 also like that, but I really love playing the drums. It seemed appropriate with the finish of our last album *(Let Go),* the reidentifying of ourselves as the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and the return of Jimmie Ibbotson." Fadden also explained that this is the reason why Vic Mastrianni is no longer with the band. "Vic is a really good drummer, but we needed to define the personality of the band which was becoming diluted with additional players. You wouldn't believe the response we're getting from the audience—'It's great to see the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band back together'—as if we had broken up."

While at one time Jimmie played trombone, tuba, wash-tub bass, jug, harmonica and drums in the band, he is currently playing only the latter two instruments. "I play the harmonica in a rack on a few tunes and the rest of the time, on the bluegrass things, I play bass drum and hi-hat for the first part of the song up until and including my solo on the harp. Then I put it down and sort of sneak the brushes in. The arrangements are such that my solo usually comes up first or second in the song, so that we can bring the dynamics in as it continues. I have an *SM-10* Shure headset microphone, which is great because when I play in a rack, it follows my mouth and wherever my mouth is on the harmonica, that's where the microphone is. Plus it alleviates the problem of an open vocal mic' ruining the drum mix. I just have to wear a baseball cap to keep it on my head.

"I've also been working on an idea for a forearm exercise device, which will be something I can throw in my suitcase. The device will be made out of surgical tubing so I can work with my arm in a bent position, similar to a normal playing position. When I do a lot of road work, I want to get into some exercise thing in order to feel good on a day-to-day basis."

Jimmie admits that he's always been primarily a stage drummer (you can hear him on all of the band's live records) and the requirements of a recording drummer are slightly different. He hopes he will be recording the band's album next month, but if not, that will be okay, for throughout the band's history, session drummers have utilized his arrangements anyway. "For instance, on *Jealousy* and *Make a Little Magic,* Rick Schlosser played what I had rehearsed with the band. We'd do work tapes, and he'd listen to them and take it from there. I felt it was a big compliment."

When Pat Travers came off the road last February, he could no longer keep **Sandy Gennaro** and the rest of the band on retainer. It was a time of transition for Travers, hence a period of change for Gennaro. "It's unfortunate that the last album, *Black Pearl,* didn't do too well. I thought it was an excellent record. We had a lot of time to prepare musically. The band arranged the songs. Pat wrote all but two songs and the band wrote one as a unit. Who knows why a record doesn't happen."

A few months ago, Saftdy initiated the First Annual Sandy Gennaro Drum Show at Studio 54 in New York. Along with Mickey Curry, Michael Shrieve, Michael Carabello and Tommy Price, Sandy incorporated video along with the music. In addition they fully utilized the club's available effects to perform a half-hour entertainment.

In a slightly different vein, if you were fortunate enough to live in one of the 13 cities to which Carmine Appice brought his Mattel *Synsonics* Drum Battle, then you caught Sandy in action this past summer. Sandy, along with Carmine, Bruce Crump and Michael Derosier, put on an elaborately staged presentation which included solos from all. "My theory behind soloing is to always leave the audience wanting a little bit more," Sandy stated. "Some drummers have a prearranged kind of thing where they do the same kind of solo. Others have a theme they keep going back to and in between playing that theme, they go off and play whatever comes into their head. Keep it concise and try to make the audience say, 'Gee, I wish he'd played just a little bit more.'

"To me, the bottom line for a drummer is to keep good time with feel," Sandy replied when asked to define a good rock drummer. "I know that 'feel' is kind of a vague word, but to me, the drummer should provide the heartbeat for the band, the foundation. Someone like Charlie Watts is a perfect example of a drummer who does this. After he has provided the foundation, he can work on his chops and technique and stuff. You have to have a certain amount of technique, sure, but the bottom line is, if the drummer doesn't have good time and good feel, being able to play every chop on earth and being the fastest drummer in the world won't make that drummer great. If a person starts out concentrating on time and feel, and then develops really good chops within that time, that individual is a great drummer. If you have a cake with all icing and no cake, what good is it? I spend a lot of my rehearsal time working on time, playing with a drum machine and then working on chops later on. A lot of drummers think the focus is chops, solo, showmanship, but the icing should come later."

You can expect the Steve **Gadd/Ralph McDonald** collaboration out soon, and you may be surprised when you hear that Steve even sings one cut. He has also, of late, been working with the likes of Carly Simon, Paul Simon, Spyro Gyra, David Sanborn (for an album and also a film he is doing) and Barry Gibb. Nashville session drummer **Tommy Wells** has been working with such people as Sammy Johns, Leon Russell, Mac Gayden, Jay Patten, Johnny Paycheck, Kathy Mattea, Gene Cotten and Chain of Command. He also played the theme song for Robert Duvall's film, *Tender Mercies,* is co-producing tracks with Mike Joyce, and working with his own rock band RPM. **Chet McCracken** was out with Joe Walsh a couple of months ago touring the U.S. and Japan. He also produced and played on two singles for Susie Allanson. **Peter Howard,** formerly of Cold Fish, now with the Clash. **Cubby O'Brien** just home from Europe with Andy Williams and has dates this month with Bernadette Peters, as well as a few with Joel Grey. **Scott Columbus** now with Manowar. **Denny Fongheiser,** of the Executives, has been recording with Lisa Nemzo. Congratulations to **Jeff Porcaro,** who will be getting married to Susan Norris this month. There's been a little delay in the release of the new Van Halen LP as earlier reported. Instead, it is going to be released on December 31st at midnight, better known as New Year's Eve, says **Alex Van Halen.** *And,* the album will open with a rousing drum solo. Happy New Year!

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

MASON, SIMMONS & THE STARS

The Guitar Center in Van Nuys, CA held a Harvey Mason/Simmons Drum Clinic recently. The event attracted quite a few top musicians. Pictured above: (Back Row L-R) Denny Seiwell, Tom Scott, Harvey Mason, Jim Keltner, Paul Jamieson, John Shearer, Dave Weiderman, Chester Thompson and Glyn Thomas. (Front Row L - R) Paul Jackson, Jr., Greg Phillinganes, Neil Stubenhaas, Mitch Mitchell, Tony Beard, and Michael Fisher.

GRETSCH CENTENNIAL: 1883-1983

With 100 years of being "The Standard Of The World," Gretsch enters its second century in the percussion marketplace. "We're combining today's technology with the quality reputation established by Friedrich Gretsch 100 years ago," commented Charlie Roy, owner and President of the Kustom/Gretsch Company.

A closely owned company since 1883, Gretsch became a subsidiary of Baldwin Piano & Organ Company in 1968. Last year it returned to private ownership with Charlie Roy purchasing the Kustom/Gretsch Company. Prior to the sale, Roy directed the move of plant operations from Booneville, Arkansas to DeQueen, Arkansas. Corporate offices have been established in Gallatin, Tennessee, a community adjacent to Nashville. Roy added, "The importance of artist relations, promotional opportunities and product testing necessitated being closer to the major music and recording mecca. Our role in the domestic-manufactured drum market will be concentrated through clinics, endorsements and increased trade advertising."

ROY BURNS JOINS GRETSCH ENDORSEE-CLINIC STAFF

Gretsch Percussion Products announced the recent addition of Roy Burns to its educational clinic staff. As a product endorsee, Burns will be available for guest clinic and concert appearances through Gretsch's educational operations. Karl Dustman, Gretsch's Percussion Marketing Manager, commented: "The addition of Roy Burns to our clinic staff opens new opportunities within the educational community. Roy will participate in product development as well as printed educational pieces as part of our drummer's Educational Aids series now in development."

Complete details on scheduling, fees and sponsorship of a Roy Burns clinic for in-store or local concert use with high school/college bands can be obtained by contacting Gretsch Percussion Marketing Services: P.O. Box 1250, Gallatin, Tennessee, 37066, Telephone (615) 452-0083. A clinician press kit is immediately available for review.

HART AND DEMERLE JOIN DC

Drummers Collective in New York City is proud to welcome Billy Hart and Les DeMerle to its faculty. Billy has performed and recorded with almost every major jazz artist. Les is known worldwide for his playing, performing, teaching, clinics and books.

For more information regarding private lessons and group workshops contact Rob Wallis or Paul Siegel, directors. (212)741-0091.

'84 JAZZ CALENDAR

Drummers Tony Williams and Shelly Manne are featured in Tom Copi's '84 Jazz Calendar, which is now available. Copi's jazz photos have appeared in publications throughout the world, including *Modern Drummer.* The calendar includes discographical and biographical information on each month's featured artist, and also lists hundreds of musicians' birthdates. There is also space for notes on each day. To order, send $7.50 (postpaid) to Tom Copi, P.O. Box 881332, San Francisco, CA 94188.

DRUMMERS FEATUREDIN PHOTO EXHIBIT

Slim Jim Phantom (Stray Cats), Rick Allen (Def Leppard) and Billy Milne (Spys) were three of the musicians featured in an exhibition of Geoffrey Thomas's photography at Danceteria in New York City. Thomas (above), whose work has appeared in *Modern Drummer,* started out as a drummer himself, before turning to photography. "Having been a musician myself gives me that extra edge in undestanding other performers," Thomas surmises. "The drums are set up in the back of my studio, and drummers from many of the bands I've worked with have had a bash on them after the photo sessions."

REMO, INC. AND P.I.T. JOIN IN DRUM TESTING PROGRAM

P.I.T.'s Joe Porcaro with Remo endorser Harvey Mason.

Remo, Inc. and the Percussion Institute of Technology have announced an agreement whereby P.I.T. will test and evaluate Remo's pre-tuned drum products on a continuing basis.

Under the agreement, *PTS* drumsets will be used extensively as studio and practice instruments, according to P.I.T.'s co-directors of curriculum, Joe Porcaro and Ralph Humphrey. Remo's R & D department will work closely with staff and students to monitor drum performance and durability.

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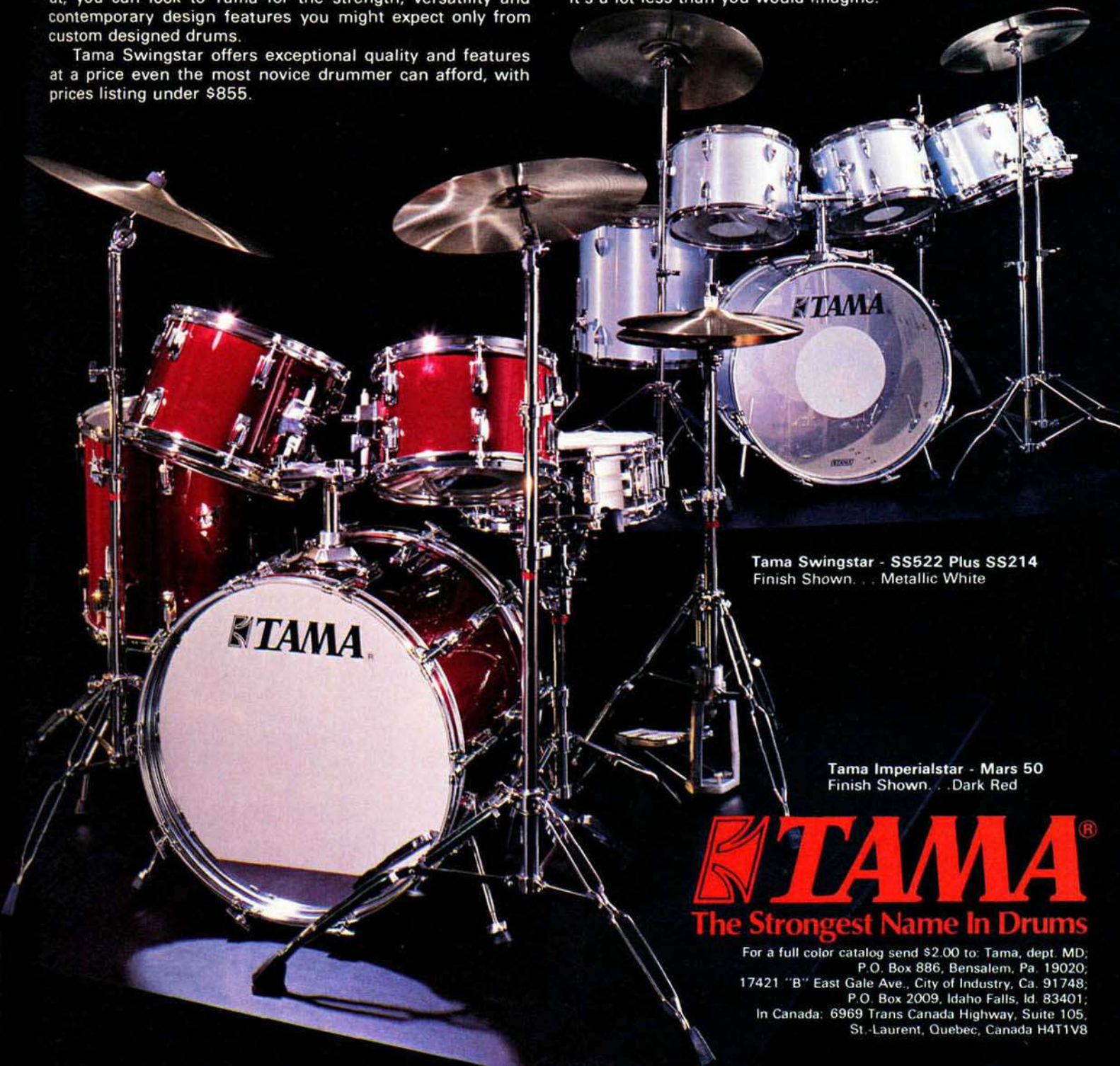

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The first in a series of new *Standmate* accessories from Tom Gauger converts an ordinary music stand into a convenient, noiseless tabletop for a fraction of the cost of a trap table. It is constructed of soft, durable cloth, features adjustable side panels with Velcro tabs, and can be quickly rolled up for easy transport or storage. For more information, contact Tom Gauger, (413) 298-3598 or (617)734-4024.

PRO-MARK OFFERS FIVE NEW HANDMADE DRUMSTICKS

Five new handmade drumstick models are now available from Pro-Mark in a choice of Japanese white or golden oak woods with wood tips.

Model 757 and Model 767 *Billy Cobham* sticks are designed to meet the requirements of jazz and rock performers, while Models *DC-3S, DC-9* and *DC-17 Rob Carson* sticks are intended primarily for drum corps and marching percussion.

Pro-Mark's Japanese white oak is a dense hardwood with consistent grain for balance and feel. Pro-Mark *Golden Oak* has similar characteristics with about 10% greater weight.

The two jazz/rock models carry a suggested list price of $6.80/pair, while the three *DC* models list for $8.00/pair.

SIMMONS ELECTRONIC CRASH CYMBAL

This new Electronic Crash Cymbal is electrically matched to trigger the Simmons *SDSV* Electronic Drum Synthesizer. It will fit any cymbal stand and has a true cymbal "feel" made possible by a patented "cymbal spring." The cymbal weighs 18 ounces, is 15" in diameter and is portable. Composed of high-impact black synthetic material, the Electronic Crash Cymbal is virtually indestructible.

IMPROVED ATLAS STANDS

Atlas stands, long considered basic among the various lines of Ludwig stands, have recently been improved, and an improved version of each model is now available from Ludwig dealers.

Among the more significant improvements are wider angle bases for greater stability; extra long basket arms on the snare drum stand to accommodate snare drums with die cast hoops; larger and self-adjusting serrated rubber feet.

According to Dick Gerlach, Ludwig Marketing Manager, "Drummers have been anxiously waiting for the return of these reliable, economically priced stands and we expect that the improvements in the line will add immeasurably to their value to the percussionist."

REMO INTRODUCES MUFFLING ACCESSORIES

Two patented drum muffling devices, which fit inside the drum without attachment, have been introduced by Remo, Inc. The *Muff'l Sound Control* provides three levels of sound control: reduced overring, studio muffling and "quiet practice." It consists of a plastic O-ring tray and two discs of 3/4" sound-absorbing foam. Using the tray alone, under the batter drumhead, produces a tight, crisp drum sound with most of the overring dampened.

Adding one foam disc into the tray produces a muffling effect for studio recording, vocal backing and pianissimo execution. Resting the second foam disc on the opposite drumhead removes virtually all resonance, when silent practice is desired.

The second product, called *Muff'l Ring Control,* consists of the plastic O-ring tray and a special foam ring which effectively reduces the drum overring.

Patents are pending on the two products. Both are furnished in seven models to fit drum sizes from 10" to 22" diameter. The Sound Controls are also available in four- and five-piece sets to fit Remo's pretuned drumsets. Catalog and price information is available from Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

THE SYSTEM

The Drum Equipment Company announces the introduction of *The System,* a unique miking and support rod for bass drums. *The System,* which mounts through the air vent, helps support the weight of toms on the bass drum, while eliminating the need for an extra microphone stand. Made of highly polished stainless steel, it is available in all bass drum sizes. For further information, contact: The Drum Equipment Company, 304 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011.

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A "warranty of satisfaction" lets new Avanti owners play their instruments for up to 90 days before deciding whether or not to keep the cymbals.

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NEW GRETSCH BRASS-PLATED SNARE DRUM MODELS

Gretsch announces the recent addition of new brass-plated snare drums to their product line. These new drums are available in either 5x14 or 6 x 14 dimensions with a choice of completely brass-plated shell and hardware, or less expensive brass plated shell with chrome hardware. This is the first time that the reflective gold-tone brass plating has been available on the drums. Triple chrome or brass plating prevails throughout, including their standard extra-strength die-cast hoops on all drums at no extra charge. Famous traditional Gretsch features include snap-in key holder, internal tone control, choice of 10 or 20 self-aligning lugs, as well as selection of either coated, black dot or pinstripe heads. A wide, 42-strand power snare unit is available at small additional cost.

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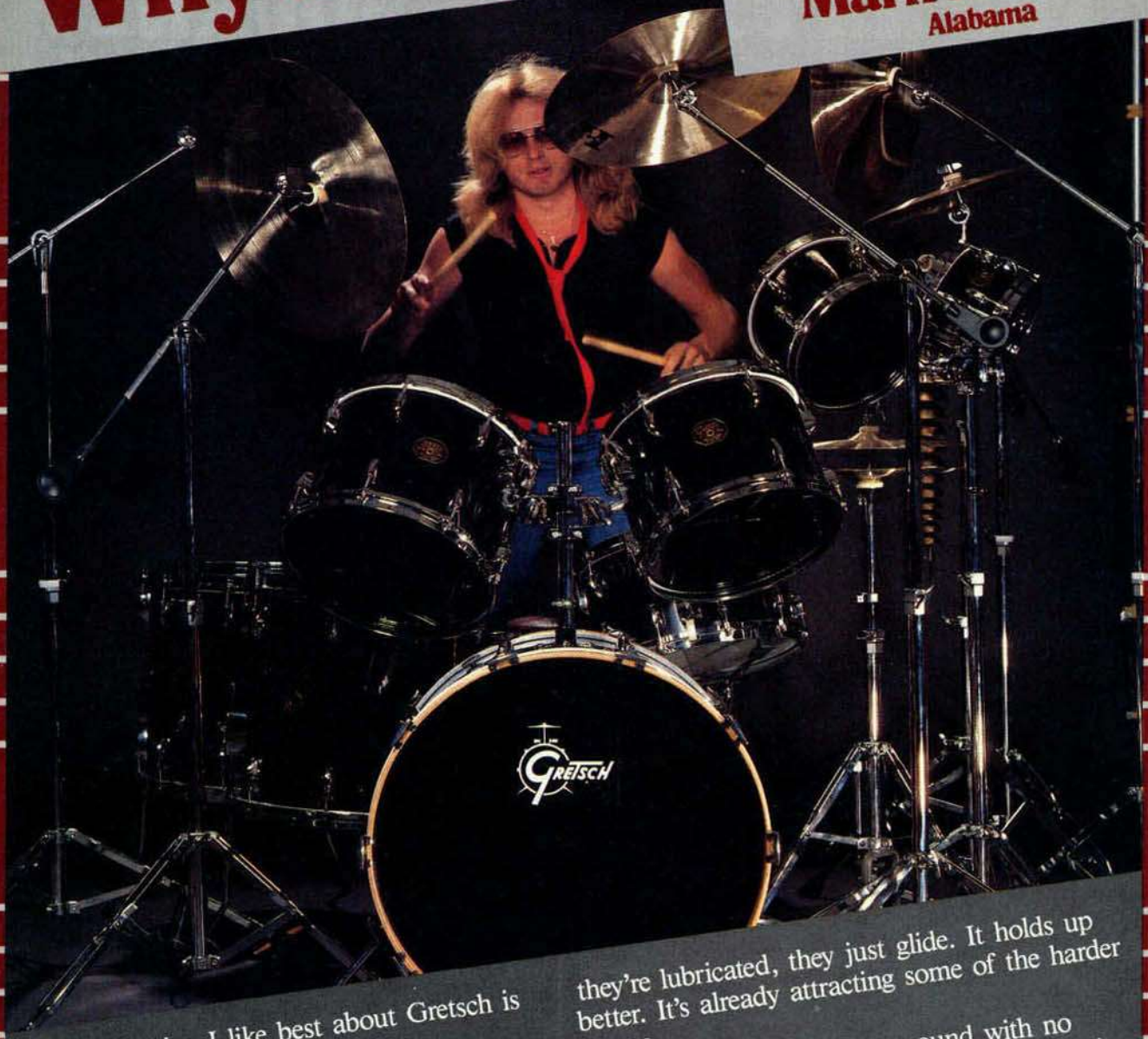

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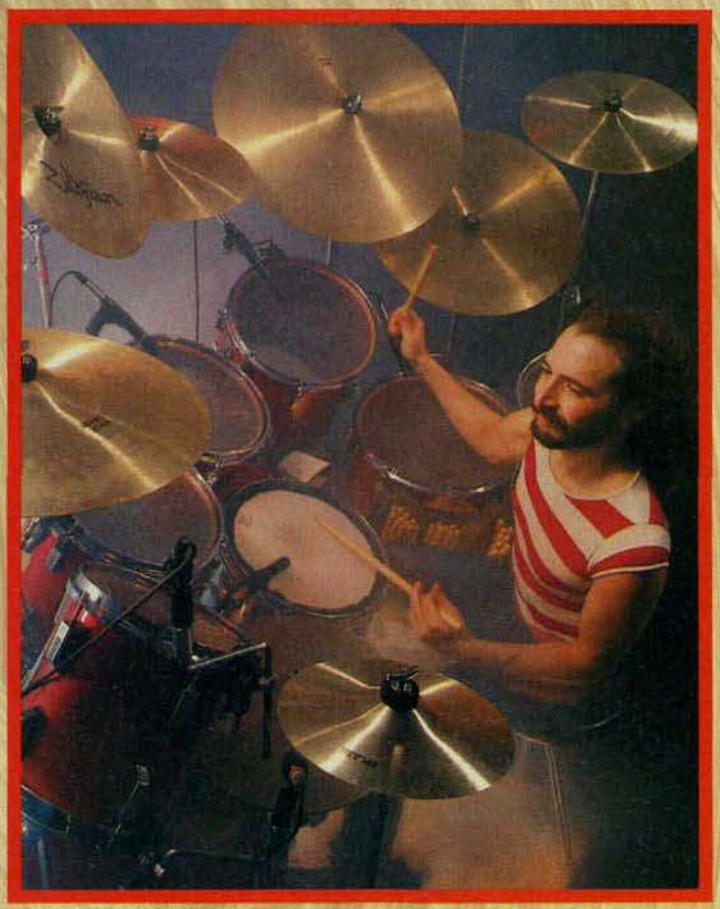

Flying high with the success of Journey, Steve Smith is one of the most versatile and talented drummers in music today.

Steve grew up just around the corner from The Zildjian factory. Of course, for the past few years he hasn't been around all that much, what with his touring with Jean Luc Ponty, Ronnie Montrose and of course the enormously successful group, Journey. However, recently Steve took a break in his wild schedule and had a chance to sit down and talk with us.

On Starting Out. "I started out playing in the fourth grade when I was nine years old and had a really good teacher. When I was in high school I got serious about playing and I got a job as a paper boy to save money to buy cymbals. My teacher used to bring me to the Zildjian factory so I could go in and pick out my own set of cymbals."

On Rock and Roll. "After college I had a lot of experience playing jazz and fusion and I had virtually no experience playing rock and roll professionally except for some high school rock things. I really wanted to follow that direction, because nowadays a drummer has to play rock and roll as well as jazz in order to be well-rounded as a musician."

On Zildjians. "The kind of music we play with Journey demands a lot of power. I've found that the cymbals in the Zildjian rock line are the only ones that can really do the job for me—that can carry the big halls and not sound thin. Zildjian cymbals have extraordinary projection but at the same time they have this wonderful, full musical tone. I also particularly like the Ping Ride—I got my first one back in the eighth grade and I've been playing one ever since."

On Career. "You know if you should get into music. It's something you can just feel. If you have to ask yourself the question, then don't bother. Being a musician isn't just a career it's a way of life.

"I find that most successful musicians don't think about success as much as they think about being a good player or songwriter. To try to focus on success is a little too contrived and usually just doesn't work."

If you're a serious drummer, chances are overwhelming that you, like Steve, are already playing Zildjians. Zildjian: a line of cymbals played by drummers on six continents—a line of cymbal-makers that spans three centuries.

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